

# Editorial

## Winds of Change?

THE DEBATE about Clause 4 is a debate which never really happened. Or rather, it would be truer to say that a phony debate, purposefully raised by Mr. Gaitskell and his close compatriots in order to strangle the subject of common ownership once and for all, and conducted by them in the most doctrinal manner possible, has come to an end without a clear decision having been declared one way or another. *The Economist*, throughout, prepared a sturdy ramp for the leadership, and *The Spectator* nobly fended off Michael Foot and the 'rebels' in its editorial columns. But despite the much-publicised National Executive meetings, and the calculated (and uncalculated) leaks to the press, and the passing of drafts in Swiss Cottage, the debate at the top failed to connect: it neither settled the question of 'means' and 'ends', nor did it envisage anything like a political timetable for the Labour Movement. While the National Executive laboured and travailed over words, the electorate yawned.

The compromise quite accurately reflects the present disposition of strength within the Party. Mr. Gaitskell carefully estimated that the shock of electoral defeat, the general torpor and the unpopularity of Morrison-style nationalisation, would be powerful enough to drive his policies through, setting "piecemeal engineering, within the framework of capitalism", at the masthead of the Party. Instead, the Left—composed on this occasion of some Left MP's, *Tribune*, the bulk of the constituencies and a scattering of centre Trade Unionists—managed to halt the drift towards tame Fabianism, without mustering enough strength to set a more socialist perspective before a faltering Party. The result, for the time being, is that Mr. Gaitskell has neither won nor lost: he has been stalemated. The New Testament, with its flabby, imprecise phrase about "the commanding heights" (which pleased everyone, without settling anything) now sits beside the Old, giving off its pale gloss. Mr. Gaitskell has been forced to accept, with better grace than he showed at Blackpool, a compromise solution, but he is still in possession of the only "commanding heights" that matter at the moment—the leadership of the Party itself.

The compromise also reflects the weakness of the Left. After ten years in the wilderness, it has failed so far to convert a manoeuvre, intended to destroy it, into a political debate which would transform the Movement. The opposition was a pretty ragged affair. The constituency parties are still instinctively inclined to the left, but they have not heard a convincing case for common ownership since 1945. Many Trade Unionists who rose to the defence of Clause 4, were acknowledging—rather guiltily—past loyalties, rather than affirming

present principles. Mr. Cousins, who knows a mixed economy when he sees one—and doesn't like it, held his hand until so late a point in the game (he did the same thing last year in the nuclear debate), that he preserved his independence, but weakened the quality of the resistance to creeping Gaitskellism. Mr. Bevan was ill. The Left, instead of being on the attack, found itself leaderless, without that compelling political vision which could give heart and direction to the Party, fighting a rearguard palace revolution.

Is the situation really so desperate? There are, surely, three main tasks for the Left. The first is to develop the moral and economic case for socialism in a developed and so-called 'affluent' society. The second is to recreate the tattered vision of a new society. The third is to discover the political means for taking us through to that society in the sixties, without the risk of nuclear extermination. Are there no answers to these questions?

In fact, the moral and economic case has been more cogently argued in the last few months than at any other time this decade. The case against a semi-stagnating, inflation-ridden, jerky and unjust 'prosperity' was presented by John Hughes, in his *Tribune* pamphlet, *Socialism in the Sixties*, in terms which even the *News Chronicle* was forced to admit had logic and cogency. Audrey Harvey's pamphlet, *Casualties of the Welfare State*, ripped to shreds the Crosland thesis that managed capitalism is delivering the goods in the welfare sector. Professor Titmuss, in *The Irresponsible Society*, showed, not only the moral bankruptcy of a society of "private opulence and public squalor", but also linked this with the compelling theme of the growing, built-in concentrations of wealth and privilege, which mock the concepts of equality and social justice. Mr. Gaitskell, who was bland and confident enough to preside over Professor Titmuss's press conference, must either have lacked the time to read the pamphlet carefully, or be incapable of understanding its political point. Michael Foot, among others, stirred by the palpable insanity of a society which permitted the atrocity of Mr. Cotton's Piccadilly monster, pushed Mr. Gaitskell into admitting that perhaps the Labour Party ought to consider the nationalisation of urban land!—a proposal so radical in its implications that it would put every policy proposal contained in the purple pages of *The Future Labour Offers You* into the shade.

The staring, unmistakable fact is, as Charles Taylor argued in his article, *What's Wrong With Capitalism* (NLR 2), that the *priorities* of our society are hopelessly wrong, and wrong, not because of the ineptitudes of Mr. Amory but because of the nature of capitalism

itself. Indeed, Mr. Harold Wilson might well have been quoting this article in his Budget speech:

“Are members really satisfied with a scale of values under which we are spending more on advertising than on industrial research, more on packaging than on education, and more on egg subsidies than universities?”

This line is even in danger of becoming fashionable: Mr. Roy Jenkins, in a rather off-hand way, referred to “private opulence and public squalor” — without, of course, taking the political point about capitalism.

Of course, in order to carry through a radical political programme which comes anywhere near matching the abuses of capitalism, we need the vision of a different society, to link together the various discontents engendered by the system, and a movement of people wider than the Opposition Front Bench. The Left, unfortunately, has to confront, not only the faulty analysis of the Right (or its sheer dishonesty when facing the implications of the facts about our society), but also its hidebound, bureaucratic, entrenched notion of how politics works. It seems safe to say that Mr. Gaitskell is incapable any longer of understanding what a popular, democratic movement of people would be like (as opposed to clammy, organisational directives from Transport House), and cannot see how this relates to the “effective opposition in Parliament”. He has consistently forgotten that the purpose of the Labour Movement is not to provide the Queen with alternative whipping-boys, but to change the society, to alter the quality of its life and the social relationships within it. Professor Titmuss’s *Irresponsible Society* may not spell out its political lessons: but he is talking about a different kind of society, which has no echo at all in Mr. Gaitskell’s “way of life, based on the glossy magazine”, enunciated with pomp and ceremony at Blackpool. Mr. Gaitskell, after all, is not a socialist leader who happens to have moderate views on common ownership: he is a bourgeois politician who happens to think that public ownership has a part to play in contemporary capitalist society. So, after all, does Mr. Maudling. The question is whether Labour is the party of a new social order, or simply another part of the contemporary scene.

Thus the sickening spectacle of the Labour benches cheering (without irony) the Budget of a Chancellor, which ignores, for all practical purposes, a dangerously inflationary situation, simply because it piddles in the stream of corporate privilege and capital gains. Or the sight of Labour MP’s, stalking righteously into the lobbies, to protest because the early-warning station at Fylingdales (four bleeps to nuclear suicide) conflicts with the principles of Town and Country Planning! It is Mr. Gaitskell, now (not Mr. Watkinson), who believes in an “independent British nuclear effort” (because of “fear of excessive dependence upon the US”), and Mr. Dennis Healey who wants a European-Nato deterrent (to “trigger off” a reluctant America). That is a leadership without any remaining shred of political or moral vision *at all*.

# Revolution

E. P. Thompson

This is the final Chapter of *Out Of Apathy*, a collection of New Left Essays, edited by E. P. Thompson, and the first of a series of books to be published by us. *Out Of Apathy* will be out at the end of May. The next number of *NLR* will carry a series of comments based on this Chapter.

AT EVERY point the way out of apathy leads us outside the conventions within which our life is confined. Out of NATO. Out of the "mixed economy". Out of the acquisitive ethos.

It is because the conventions themselves are being called in question, and not the tactical manoeuvring which takes place within them, that the gulf which is opening between the young socialist generation and traditional Labour politicians is so deep.

It is a gulf as deep as that which opened in the 1880s between the Lib-Lab politicians and the new unionists and socialists. "Mr. Gaitskell, if he read it, would certainly not obtain a clear idea of what, in detail, he was supposed to do"—this is Mr. Antony Crosland's comment, when reviewing Dennis Potter's *The Glittering Coffin* in the *Spectator*. Mr. Howell or Mr. Broadhurst, if they had picked up a copy of *Commonweal* or *Justice*, would have been faced with similar difficulties.

Of course it is generally agreed (as Mr. Crosland remarks in the same review) that "the Labour Party badly needs a dose of iconoclasm at the present moment." Even psephologists can see that the Party requires "an influx of Youth" if it is "to present itself to the electorate in a mid-20th-century guise." And since there is no choice, Transport House Grundies, who have won past battle-honours by decimating Youth, are now prepared to encourage angry radical noises in jazz clubs or coffee bars on the periphery of the movement.

But the ikons which the Aldermaston generation is breaking are the very ones before which Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Crosland bow down: the permanent Cold War: the permanent dependence of Labour upon "affluent" capitalism: the permanent defensive ideology of defeatism and piece-meal reform.

What lies beyond these conventions? Where is the point of breakthrough? Breakthrough into what?

If the image of power must be re-made at the base, it must also be re-made at the top. The Clause 4 debate within the Labour Party provides every day fresh examples of the way in which concepts of power are concealed within the cloudy metaphors of rhetoric, which attempt verbal reconciliations between traditional socialist loyalties and actual accommodation to capitalism. "A clear statement that the party remains committed to capturing . . . the 'commanding heights of the economy'"—the *New Statesman* editorialises (5 March, 1960)—"is the formula on which Mr. Gaitskell could surely re-unite the National Executive."

We cannot pretend to prescribe a "formula" which will "unite" the National Executive. But it should be noted that the image of the "commanding heights" (without exact qualification) offers more than it defines. To some, it may indicate the power of a Labour Chancellor to influence the Bank Rate; to others, the power to introduce a Five-Year Plan covering the output of Icelandic cod, Somerset cider-apples and Scunthorpe steel. Are the "heights" those of Monte Cassino or of Hampstead Heath—the one required a certain effort to storm, and its storming was the turning-point of a whole campaign, the other can be reached by tube from Westminster. And are we, by some sudden forced march (the nationalisation of steel and chemicals?) to find ourselves occupying the commanding heights of the economy, while at the same time leaving the Monte Cassino of the mass media, with its surveillance over the means of communication, information, controversy, in the hands of irresponsible oligopolists?

Mr. Gaitskell's and Mr. Crosland's play with the terms "means" and "ends" is more obviously specious. It is true, of course, that the replacement of production for profit by production for use is (from one standpoint) only a means to the attainment of a Society of Equals. True also that it is only one means among many. But what is obscured in this argument is that *without* the displacement of the dynamic of the profit motive all other means will prove ineffectual, and it is the definition of this as an *essential* means which distinguishes the socialist tradition.

This does not mean that nationalisation by State monopoly is the *only* alternative to private ownership; the debate on other forms (municipal, and co-operative) is fruitful. Nor does it mean that there is some *automatic* relationship between social ownership and socialist institutions or moral dispositions: that the superstructure of a "good society" *must* grow in a certain way once the basis has been established. Indeed, it is one distinction between socialist theory and the outlook of the Fabian administrator that the former recognises that the Society of Equals cannot be made without a revolution in moral attitudes and social practices too far-reaching to be reduced by even an enlightened National Executive to a "formula".

But here also we must guard against the *specious* appeal to morality, the posing of "values" outside the context of power. "Socialism", Mr. Crosland tells us,

“denotes a belief in the pre-eminence of certain values, such as equality or co-operation or collective welfare or internationalism. But such values are not absolute. They cannot be held rigidly and uncompromisingly, any more than can the opposite conservative values of hierarchy or competition or individualism or patriotism.”

(*the Future of the Left*, *Encounter*, March 1960)

We are back at the game of Happy Families: we can pair off opposite “values” (which are not “absolute”), and look for the good society somewhere in the marital blur in the middle. If, however, we were to pair off exploitation and mutual aid, the encouragement of living culture and the mass production of commercial culture, the businessman’s expense account and the railwayman’s wage, advertising and education, nuclear disarmament and Blue Streak, we could have reached a different result. The true contradictions and antagonisms of our society would have become apparent: and Mr. Crosland *and* capitalist values would have been found on one side, socialist values on the other. For the contradiction which *expresses* itself in opposed values is grounded in the private ownership of the social means of production. The profit-motive remains at the core of our social order, engendering new conflicts which by their nature may be controlled or mitigated but cannot be resolved. Nor is this the most important thing. A controlled antagonism may be enduring: they exist even within Happy Families. We might put up with the Opportunity State, knowing that welfare services provide a set of rooms at the bottom for those who don’t go up. We might put up with the profit-motor, knowing that the unions are still strong enough to jack up the railwayman’s wage above the poverty-line. But controlled antagonisms are constantly breaking out in new, uncontrolled ways: the compensation received by coal-owners burgeons into profits in light industry: the housing schemes of well-intentioned municipalities sink under the earth beneath accumulated interest-repayments: money searches continually for new ways to breed money. And, at the end of it all, we have a society grounded on antagonism. We remain for ever removed from a Society of Equals.

## Accommodations and Antagonisms

When Mr. Crosland offers us, in the same essay, the Sermon on the Mount (a favourite evasion of Philip Snowden’s) and quotes with approval—“it may be better simply to say with William Morris that Socialism is fellowship”—it becomes difficult to know at what point a serious discussion may be entered. We might start with Morris, who was a revolutionary socialist. In his early propagandist years, Morris thought somewhat naively of an insurrectionary revolution, on the model of the Paris Commune. In 1893 he had come to envisage the final conquest of power as taking place by parliamentary means; but his concept of the revolutionary transition was little changed:

“The first real victory of the Social Revolution will be the establishment not indeed of a complete system of communism in a day, which is absurd, but of a revolu-

tionary administration whose *definite and conscious aim* will be to prepare and further, in all available ways, human life for such a system . . .” (W.M.’s italics).

In the year before his death he still feared that the transition would be accompanied by violence of some kind:

“We are living in an epoch where there is combat between commercialism, or the system of reckless waste, and communism, or the system of neighbourly common sense. Can that combat be fought out . . . without loss and suffering? Plainly speaking I *know* that it cannot.”

Morris was not writing in ignorance of the Fabian alternative which found its first mature expression in the *Essays* of 1889. He conducted the argument with the Fabians in lectures, journals, club-rooms; and since so much of our Labour history has been presented in Fabian guise it is worth recalling the terms of Morris’ dissent. Shaw proposed that there might be “a gradual transition to Social Democracy”, effected in the main by steady municipal encroachment upon private enterprise; “the gradual extension of the franchise; and the transfer of rent and interest to the State, not in one lump sum, but by instalments.” Morris objected that this ignored the essential antagonism at the heart of capitalist society:

“The barrier which they will not be able to pass . . . (is) the *acknowledgement of the class war*. The ‘Socialists’ of this kind are blind as to the essence of modern society. They hope for a revolution, which is not *the* Revolution, but a revolution which is to ignore the facts that have led up to it and will bring it about . . .” (W.M.’s italics).

## The Quasi-Socialist Machinery

It was not the necessity of a *violent* revolution upon which Morris was insisting, but the necessity for a critical conflict in every area of life at the point of transition. Transition from the system of “reckless waste” to that of “neighbourly common sense” could not be effected by some administrative or fiscal *coup d’état*. A merely parliamentary socialist party might “fall into the error of moving earth and sea to fill the ballot boxes with Socialist votes which will not represent Socialist *men*.” If the evolutionary road were followed, he repeatedly asked “how far the betterment of the working people might go and yet stop short at last without having made any progress on the *direct* road to Communism?”

“Whether . . . the tremendous organisation of civilised commercial society is not playing the cat and mouse game with us socialists. Whether the Society of Inequality might not accept the quasi-socialist machinery . . . and work it for the purpose of upholding that society in a somewhat shorn condition, maybe, but a safe one . . . The workers better treated, better organised, helping to govern themselves, but with no more pretence to equality with the rich . . . than they have now.”

With the foundation of the Labour Party it seemed that the Fabians had won the argument. The Webbs (G. D. H. Cole commented in 1913) “were able so completely . . . to impose their conception of society on the Labour movement that it seemed unnecessary for any one to do any further thinking.” Fabian theories

(Mr. Strachey added, in 1938) "not merely false, but almost absurdly inadequate . . . to cover the complex, stormy, dynamic social phenomena of the twentieth century" were "allowed to become the theory of the British working-class movement". On the credit side, the advance in the strength of organised Labour, the encroachments of the welfare state; on the debit side, the division of Africa, the slump, two world wars. By 1930 the debate raged once more. "It is not so certain today as it seemed in the 'eighties that Morris was not right," commented Shaw in his preface to the 1931 edition of *Fabian Essays*. Throughout the next 15 years the two outstanding non-Communist theoreticians of British Socialism—Harold Laski and G. D. H. Cole—were discussing constructively the nature of the "transition" in Britain, and the ways to circumvent capitalist resistance. But, after 1945, it was not capitalist opposition which was circumvented:

"People who talk too much soon find themselves up against it. Harold Laski, for instance. A brilliant chap . . . but he started making speeches at week-ends. I had to get rid of him.

. . . G. D. H. Cole was another brilliant chap. A very clear mind. But he used to have a new idea every year, irrespective of whether the ordinary man was interested in it or not . . ."

Thus Lord Attlee on "What Sort of Man Gets to the Top?" (*Observer*, 7 February, 1960). With *that* sort of man at the top, the system of neighbourly common sense might well seem unattainable.

To present the argument in this way is to foreshorten it, and, in the later stages, to caricature it. We have omitted, among other matters of substance, the constructive additions of syndicalists and Guild Socialists; the injection of the Russian example and of Leninism into the whole debate; the more sophisticated elaborations of post-Keynesian evolutionary theory; and the bedevilment of the whole argument by the ugly practices of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" on the Stalinist model.

## A Transition to Socialism

But what we mean to direct attention to is the extraordinary hiatus in contemporary Labour thinking on this most crucial point of all—how, and by what means is a transition to socialist society to take place? For Mr. Gaitskell the problem may be irrelevant. The political see-saw is its own justification. "The British prefer the two-Party system," he informed a conference called (in Rhodes) by the Congress for Cultural Freedom in 1958: "They understand team games and they know it gives them stable, strong government." For Mr. Gordon Walker (it may be) the goal is clear:

"In the antechamber outside the Cabinet room where Ministers gather before meeting, there is a row of coat-pegs. Under each peg is the name of a great office of state . . . Only Cabinet Ministers hang their hats and coats there—and only in the prescribed order—"

or so he informs the open-mouthed readers of *Encounter* (April 1956), and we have no special reason to disbelieve him. But there remains a subtle difference between

speculation as to *which peg* you may hang your coat on and *which point* will disclose the moment of revolutionary transition. Mr. Dennis Healey and Mr. Crosland are anxious to disabuse us of this belief: *power* (they tell us) is all: when the coats are on the pegs, we may leave it to them:

"There is much talk (though rather more in Chelsea and Oxford than in Stepney or Nyasaland) of the dangers of sacrificing principle; what is forgotten is the sacrifice of Socialist objectives, not to mention human freedom and welfare, involved in a long period of impotent opposition."

(Crosland in *Encounter* again)

It is not clear which specifically *socialist* objectives (other than "values" which are not "absolute") Mr. Crosland has in mind. Nor do other potential peg-hangers offer us much more enlightenment. "The Liberal and Labour Movements of the West," Mr. R. H. S. Crossman assures us, "have triumphantly falsified the predictions of Karl Marx:

"They have used the institutions of democracy to begin the job of resolving the inherent contradictions of capitalism, evening out the gross inequalities, and transforming the privileges of the bourgeoisie into rights of every citizen." (Also *Encounter*, June 1956)

## The Conventions of Capitalism

But how does one "resolve" an "inherent contradiction"? And if the job has been *begun*, at what point does it *end*? And if the contradiction ends in a *socialist* "resolution", which predictions of Marx will this triumphantly falsify?

And yet the only sustained approach to such enquiries is in Mr. Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism*. "Last-stage capitalism" (he tells us)

"will be succeeded not by still a third version of the system, but by something which it would be manifestly an abuse of language to call capitalism at all." (p. 41).

We should certainly be reluctant to abuse language. But meanwhile "last-stage capitalism" abuses our lives, and it would be of interest to learn when the "succession" (or "transcendence", as he says elsewhere) is due to take place. "Democracy" (he tells us) "can hope to bit and bridle last stage capitalism, and then to transform it, ultimately to the degree that (it) is no longer capitalism" (p. 281). It seems that we must await a further volume before we may learn what underlies the terms "transform", "ultimately", and "degree". Perhaps Mr. Strachey is inhibited by echoes from the past?

"It is . . . impossible for the working and capitalist classes to share the power of the State over a whole prolonged period of social evolution . . . Class antagonisms are far too fierce for such diarchies, or conditions of divided power, to be possible for more than brief periods, and then always precariously. It is an illusion, in particular, to suppose that the capitalist class will passively allow the political power of the workers to grow and grow, while the Labour movement pursues a steady policy of socialisation and other encroachments upon capitalism."

(John Strachey, *What Are We To Do*, 1938.)

The absence of any theory of the transition to Socialism is the consequence of actual capitulation to the conventions of capitalist politics. And the political accommodation is complemented by a social and moral accommodation which spreads out into every region of

life. Ursula, in *The Rainbow*, regarded with horror the mining town of Wiggiston where her Uncle Tom was colliery manager, with its rows of houses "each with its small activity made sordid by barren cohesion with the rest of the small activities":

"There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation. There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin-disease."

"But is this place as awful as it looks?" she asked her uncle. "It is just what it looks," Uncle Tom replied. "Why are the men so sad?" she asked:

"I don't think they are that. They just take it for granted . . ."

"Why don't they alter it?" she passionately protested.

"They believe that they must alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter the pits and the place to fit themselves. It is easier," he said.

The dialogue reminds us of Mr. Crosland's incomprehension before *The Glittering Coffin*: "Smashing Things" was the title of his review. True, the miners *have* altered their environment, to a greater degree than most other workers. True, the smoke-stained squalor of red-brick gives way before the garish squalor of neon and white tile. But the accommodation continues, there is no more "organic formation" or active, liberating social cohesion than before. The point is not that we assent to all of Ursula's emotional Luddism ("We could easily do without the pits"), but that conventional Labour politics have narrowed to a region of legislative manipulation where Ursula's protest is met with blank incomprehension. However the offices were distributed in the last Labour Cabinet, one feels that Uncle Tom's coat hung from every peg. Mr. Gaitskell has written "brotherhood" and "fellowship" into Labour's Constitution (it was there, without the writing, in the days of Morris and Tom Mann). But the Utopian protest, the vision of new human possibilities constrained within old forms, which is an essential part of the socialist dynamic, has become extinguished in the weary self-important Philistinism and the myopic "realism" of the capitalist parliamentarian. Between television appearances, "brotherhood" and "fellowship" can scarcely be thought to have their incarnation in the Parliamentary Labour Party or the T.U.C. Betwixt political and moral accommodation, we remain becalmed.

## Models of Revolution

Two models of the transition (if we may simplify) are commonly on offer. The first, the evolutionary model, of gradual piece-meal reform in an institutional continuum, until *at some undefined point* some measure will be taken (a bit more nationalisation? More State controls over the private sector?) when the balance will tip slightly in favour of the socialist "resolution": and we shall acclaim this moment with a change in our terminology. The main participation demanded of the people is to cross the ballot-paper 13 or 14 million times. This model must be rejected if the evidence and arguments presented in the first part of this book are valid.

It should not be assumed, however, that the model of revolution presented by some Labour fundamentalists is therefore acceptable. It is not only that its very terms carry an aroma of barricades and naval mutinies in an age of flame-throwers. It is also that the antagonisms of capitalist society are presented in a falsely anti-theoretical manner—without any sense of the contradictory processes of change. An imaginary line is drawn through society, dividing the workers in "basic" industries from the rest. The class struggle tends to be thought of as a series of brutal, head-on encounters (which it sometimes is); not as a conflict of force, interests, values, priorities, ideas, taking place ceaselessly in every area of life. Its culmination is seen as being a moment when the opposed classes stand wholly *disengaged* from each other, confronting each other in naked antagonism; not as the climax to ever closer *engagement* within existing institutions, demanding the most constructive deployment of skills as well as of force. It is "their" State versus "our" (imaginary) State; "their" institutions which must be "smashed" before ours can be built; their society which must be "overthrown" before the new society can be made. Communists and Labour fundamentalists of the "statist" variety tend to place emphasis upon an hypothetical parliamentary majority which, in a dramatic period of breaking-and-making, will legislate a new State into existence from above. Trotskyists tend to place emphasis upon industrial militancy overthrowing existing institutions from below.

## The Cataclysmic Model

This cataclysmic model of revolution is derived from the Marxist tradition, although it owes more to Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin than to Marx. Two points only can be noted here. First, Marx's concession that Britain and America might effect a peaceful transition to Socialism was negated by Lenin in 1917 on the grounds that "in the epoch of the first great imperialist war" Anglo-Saxon "liberty" had become submerged in the "filthy, bloody morass of military-bureaucratic institutions to which everything is subordinated". Hence, the necessary preliminary for "every real people's revolution is the smashing, the *destruction* of the ready-made state machine." This dictum Stalin ossified (in 1924) into the "inevitable law of violent proletarian revolution."

From this follows a wholly indiscriminating assimilation of *all* institutions to the "military-bureaucratic". Certainly, no approach to Socialism today is conceivable without breaking-up the Cold War institutions "to which everything is subordinated"—NATO, the Aldermaston Weapons Research Establishment, and their multiform ramifications. But the point here is that we must discriminate. There is substance in Mr. Strachey's thesis of countervailing powers, provided that we are willing to take up the argument at the point where he fuddles it over. Since 1848, 1917, and notably since 1945, many of our institutions have been actively shaped by popular pressures and by the adjust-

ment to these pressures on the part of capitalist interests. But it is at this point that we encounter the second crippling fallacy of the fundamentalist. Since all advances of the past century have been contained within the capitalist system, the fundamentalist tends to argue that in fact no “real” advance has taken place. The conceptual barrier derives in this case from a false distinction in Leninist doctrine between the bourgeois and the proletarian revolution. The bourgeois revolution (according to this legend) begins when “more or less finished forms of the capitalist order” already exist “within the womb of feudal society”. Capitalism was able to grow up *within* feudalism, and to co-exist with it—on uneasy terms—until prepared for the seizure of political power. But the proletarian revolution “begins when finished forms of the Socialist order are either absent, or almost completely absent.” This is because, with the exception of marginal co-operative enterprises, it was supposed that forms of social ownership or democratic control over the means of production were incompatible with capitalist state power. The two systems could in no way co-exist, since socialism could not grow “within the womb” of capitalism:

“The bourgeois revolution is usually *consummated* with the seizure of power, whereas in the proletarian revolution the seizure of power is only the *beginning* . . .” (1).

### Interpenetrating Opposites

From this conceptual inhibition, many consequences flow. From this, the sterility of the usual Fabian-Marxist debate between “reformism” and “revolution”, which has scarcely advanced since the days of Hyndman and Shaw. From this, the caricaturing of social advances as “bribes” to buy off revolution, and the attribution of supreme cunning to the capitalist system, which by a superb Marxist logic is able to anticipate and deflect every assault by the working class. From this also, the hypocritical attitude which concedes the need to struggle for reforms, not for the sake of the reform but for the educative value of the struggle. Hence, finally, the alienation of many humane people, who detect in the doctrinaire revolutionary an absence of warm response to the needs of living people and a disposition to anticipate the coming of depression or hardship with impatience.

But if we discard this dogma (the fundamentalists might meditate on the “interpenetration of opposites”) we can read the evidence another way. It is not a case of *either* this *or* that. We must, at every point, see *both*—the surge forward *and* the containment, the public sector *and* its subordination to the private, the strength of trade unions *and* their parasitism upon capitalist growth, the welfare services *and* their poor relation status. The countervailing powers are there, and the equilibrium (which is an equilibrium *within capitalism*) is precarious. It could be tipped back towards authoritarianism. But it could also be heaved *forward*, by

popular pressures of great intensity, to the point where the powers of democracy cease to be countervailing and become the active dynamic of society in their own right. This is revolution.

There is not one, abstract Revolution, which would have assumed the same form in 1889, 1919, and 1964. The *kind* of revolution which we can make today is different from any envisaged by Marx or Morris. It is as different from Lenin’s model as the English Civil War was different from the French 1789. Our coming revolution could be a “consummation” of some things, a “beginning” of others. Nor is there only *one* kind of revolution which can be made in any given context. A revolution does not “happen”: it must be *made* by men’s actions and choices. During a period of exceptional fluidity and heightened political awareness, institutions may be built or re-moulded which become “set” for many years. A revolution which is botched or muddled into will entail consequences which reach far into the future.

It is not the violence of a revolution which decides its extent and consequences, but the maturity and activity of the people. Violence does not make anything more “real”. 1789 was not more secure because it was cataclysmic, and 1917 was not more socialist because socialists seized power by force. It is possible to look forward to a peaceful revolution in Britain, with far greater continuity in social life and in institutional forms than would have seemed likely even 20 years ago, not because it will be a semi-revolution, nor because capitalism is “evolving” into socialism; but because the advances of 1942–48 *were* real, because the socialist *potential* has been enlarged, and socialist forms, however imperfect, have grown up “within” capitalism.

The point of breakthrough is not one more shuffle along the evolutionary path, which suddenly sinks the scales on the socialist side (51 per cent in the public sector instead of 49 per cent). An historical transition between two ways of life cannot be effected by an entry in a ledger; it involves the dislodgement, not only of certain “interests”, but of entrenched institutions, customs, superstitions, and moral codes. Nor is it inconceivable, in the age of automation and nuclear energy, that the *capitalist* State might acquire a commanding role (even 51 per cent) within the whole economy, without any subversion of capitalist society: the status-struggle, the Directors’ meetings, the Eton-Harrow match, the *News of the World*—all would go on.

### Revolution of Content

Certainly, the transition can be defined, in the widest historical sense, as a transfer of class power: the dislodgement of the power of capital from the “commanding heights” and the assertion of the power of socialist democracy. This is the historical watershed between “last stage” capitalism and dynamic socialism—the point at which the socialist potential is liberated, the public sector assumes the dominant role, subordinating the private to its command, and over a very great area

(1) The examples here are taken from Stalin’s *On the Problems of Leninism* (1926); but the influence of this concept is to be found far outside the Communist tradition.

of life the priorities of need over-rule those of profit. But this point cannot be defined in narrow political (least of all parliamentary) terms; nor can we be certain, in advance, in what context the breakthrough will be made. What it is more important to insist upon is that it is necessary to *find out* the breaking-point, not by theoretical speculation alone, but in practice by unrelenting reforming pressures in many fields, which are designed to reach a revolutionary culmination. And the point of breakthrough is not a narrow political concept: it will entail a confrontation, throughout society, between two systems, two ways of life. In this confrontation, political consciousness will become heightened; every direct and devious influence will be brought to the defence of property-rights; the people will be forced by events to exert their whole political and industrial strength. A confrontation of this order is not to be confined within the pages of *Hansard*; it involves the making of revolution simultaneously in many fields of life. It involves the breaking-up of some institutions (and the House of Lords, Sandhurst, Aldermaston, the Stock Exchange, the press monopolies and the National Debt are among those which suggest themselves), the transformation and modification of others (including the House of Commons and the nationalised Boards), and the transfer of new functions to yet others (town councils, consumers' councils, trades councils, shop stewards committees, and the rest). The *form* of a revolution may depend upon forms of power; but, in the last analysis, its *content* depends upon the consciousness and will of the people.

## The Monopolists and The People

As the kind of revolution which is possible has changed, so has the kind of potential revolutionary situation. We need no longer think of disaster as the prelude to advance. In one sense, we are now constantly living on the edge of a revolutionary situation. It is because we dare not break through the conventions between us and that situation, that the political decay of apathy prevails. But such a revolution demands the maximum enlargement of positive demands, the deployment of constructive skills within a conscious revolutionary strategy, the assertion of the values of the common good—or, in William Morris's words, the "making of Socialists". It cannot, and must not, rely exclusively upon the explosive negatives of class antagonism. And this is the more easy to envisage if we cease to draw that imaginary line between the industrial workers and the rest. The number of people who are wholly and unambiguously interested in the defence of the *status quo* is small, despite Ralph Samuel's warnings of the growing retinue of the corporations. Alongside the industrial workers we should see the teachers who want better schools, scientists who wish to advance research, welfare workers who want hospitals, actors who want a National Theatre, technicians impatient to improve industrial organisation. Such people do not want these things only

and always, any more than all industrial workers are always "class conscious" and loyal to their great community values. But these affirmatives co-exist, fitfully and incompletely, with the ethos of the Opportunity State. It is the business of socialists to draw the line, not between a staunch but diminishing minority and an unredeemable majority, but between the monopolists and the people—to foster the "societal instincts" and inhibit the acquisitive. Upon these positives, and not upon the debris of a smashed society, the socialist community must be built.

## How the New Model Might Work

And *how* is this to be done? At this point a new volume should begin.

The elaboration of a democratic revolutionary strategy, which draws into a common strand wage-demands and ethical demands, the attack on capitalist finance and the attack on the mass media, is the immediate task. It demands research and discussion: journals, books, Left Clubs. It demands organisation for education and propaganda. It demands the exchange of ideas between specialists and those whose experience—in nationalised industry or in local government—enables them to see more clearly than the theorist the limits of the old system, the growing-points of the new.

It demands also a break with the parliamentary fetishism which supposes that all advance must wait upon legislative change. Most popular gains have been won, in the first place, by direct action: direct action to increase wages, improve working conditions, shorten hours, build co-ops, found nursery schools. We do not need a formula from the NEC of the Labour Party, before we can form tenants' associations or socialist youth clubs, write plays or force upon the Coal Board new forms of workers' control.

Nor should this be seen as an *alternative* to the work of the existing institutions of the Labour movement. The defenders of Clause 4 are, in one sense, holding firm to the concept of socialist revolution. Too often the concept is defended out of *religious* loyalty, an avowal of faith that the Clause might perhaps, in our great-grandchildren's time, be dusted and put to use. What is required is a new sense of immediacy. Socialists should be fighting, not a defensive battle for an ambiguous clause, but an offensive campaign to place the transition to the new society at the head of the agenda. In this, the new protest of the Aldermaston generation against the conventions of politics, and the traditional loyalties of the Labour rank-and-file could—although they will not automatically do so—come together in a common agitation.

In the end, we must return to the focus of political power: Parliament. It is here that the prospect appears most hopeless, the conventions of capitalism most strong, the accommodation most absolute. But we need not despair. It is the greatest illusion of the ideology of apathy that politicians make events. In fact, they customarily legislate to take account of events which

have already occurred. (Did *Lord Attlee* really free India? Did *Lord Morrison of Lambeth* wrest the pits from the coal owners?) Of course, more socialists must be sent into Parliament. It is through such a movement of agitation from below that new leaders of genuine calibre will mature. But, in the last analysis, the context will dictate to the politicians, and not the reverse. And socialists must make the context.

Meanwhile, our local problems are contained within the larger context of nuclear diplomacy and imperial retreat. From this, an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity for a revolutionary breakthrough might as possibly arise from international as from local political or industrial causes. Should the protest in Britain gain sufficient strength to force our country out of NATO, consequences will follow in rapid succession. The Americans might reply with economic sanctions. Britain would be faced with the alternatives of compliance or of a far-reaching re-orientation of trade. The dilemma would agitate the consciousness of the whole people, not as an abstract theory of revolution but as an actual and immediate political choice, debated in the factories, offices and streets. People would become aware of the historic choice presented to our country, as they became aware during the Second World War. Ideological and political antagonisms would sharpen. Non-compliance with America would entail winning the active, informed support of the majority of the people for policies which might bring with them dislocation and hardship. Hardship would involve the fair distribution of resources. The dogmas of the sterling area would fall. Stringent controls would have to be imposed upon the banks and finance-houses. Curragh-like intrigues by members of the military ruling caste might raise the question of "smashing" the military-bureaucratic institutions. One choice would disclose another, and with each decision a revolutionary conclusion might become more inescapable. Events themselves would disclose to people the possibility of the socialist alternative; and if events were seconded by the agitation and initiatives of thousands of convinced socialists in every area of life, the socialist revolution would be carried through.

This is not offered as a "prediction" but as an impression of *one* possible way in which a revolutionary situation could arise, resulting not from disaster but from an active popular initiative. And the challenge is this. Of all Western countries, Britain is perhaps the best placed to effect such a transition. The equilibrium here is most precarious, the Labour movement least divided, the democratic socialist tradition most strong. And it is *this* event which could at one blow break up the log-jam of the Cold War and initiate a new wave of world advance. Advance in Western Europe, and, in less direct ways, democratisation in the East, may wait upon us.

### How Long Can We Wait?

Is it useless to wait? Will Iceland or Italy break through first? Will Britain founder under old habits,

rotting institutions, its hull encrusted with nostalgia, drifting half-waterlogged into the twenty-second century, a bourgeois Spain among the socialist nations? It would be foolish to be sanguine. But foolish also to underestimate the long and tenacious revolutionary tradition of the British commoner.

It is a dogged, good-humoured, responsible, peaceable tradition: yet a revolutionary tradition all the same. From the Leveller corporals ridden down by Cromwell's men at Burford to the weavers massed behind their banners at Peterloo, the struggles for democratic and for social rights have always been intertwined. From the Chartist camp meeting to the dockers' picket line, it has expressed itself most naturally in the language of moral revolt. Its weaknesses, its carelessness of theory, we know too well; its strengths, its resilience and steady humanity, we too easily forget. It is a tradition which could leaven the socialist world.

"Housing is the centre of the problem, since eviction of a family for non-payment of rent is usually the start of a hopeless struggle to find new accommodation. Last year five million people were waiting for new council housing, two million of them classed as "urgent needers"; in 1956 the LCC had only 300 three-room flats to offer to nearly 72,000 families who required them".

*The Observer*

# Men and Motors—1

Denis Butt

This article—the first of two on the motor industry—discusses trade union structure and organisation, the tangled pattern of wages, the role of the shop steward, the problem of automation, and the political attitudes of motor workers in the Midlands. Much of the factual industrial and trade union material came from discussion with Mr. J. L. Jones, Midlands Regional Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union. We should like to express our thanks to him, and to the many other trade union officials, shop stewards and car workers, who willingly co-operated in their limited spare time. None of them is responsible for the article or the opinions expressed. In the second article, Duncan MacBeth will deal with the importance of the motor industry to our economy, and the problems which arise from the unplanned use of the motor car.

FROM THE evidence available to the general newspaper reader, the behaviour of the workers in the motor car industry may be reckoned a disturbing puzzle. Employed in making a commodity which has itself become one of the most valued status symbols at home and currency earners abroad, their own high earnings, especially in the West Midlands' centres, are a legend even in "prosperity" Britain. Indeed their wealth seems only to be exceeded by their discontent. No news bulletin nowadays seems complete without a report of some motor workers' strike, often "unofficial", apparently on the most trivial pretext, usually concerned with wages, and led by shop stewards whose authority is seemingly as unquestioned as their disregard for the unemployment of innocent thousands is vicious. Yet this unsleeping militancy offers little consolation to the radical. In the 1959 General Election the West Midlands area, precisely the area in which the most crowded centres of the motor industry and its dependent industries are situated, registered a swing away from Labour notable even for that election. In Birmingham the loss of three Labour seats restored the pre-1945 Tory preponderance; even Coventry, the proverbial "boom town" of the car industry and widely regarded as the showpiece of municipal Socialism, at last found a seat for a Tory. Industrial militancy, scandalous though it is to journalists, evidently does not extend to politics. Seen from a distance the attitude of the motor worker—prosperous, restless, socially apathetic—might almost be taken for a symbol of the general attitude of affluent British society. It is worthwhile taking a closer look at the experience behind the attitude.

Something needs to be said first of all about the organisation of the industry itself, for one of the initial difficulties encountered, by trade union organisers and strike leaders among others, is in simply enumerating "Motor Car Workers" and in deciding where the boundaries of the industry are to be drawn. Apart from final vehicle manufacturers and the producers of components for direct inclusion in the end product (electrical equipment, tyres, engine parts, etc.—some of which in themselves support great and thriving firms) motor cars are nourished by many outside industries

(steel, rubber, glass, leather, textiles, etc.) which are not counted as part of the trade, but which are, in some cases, wholly dependent on it for their economic existence. These ramifications must be mentioned again, for they spread the economic consequences of the motor industry far and wide, and trade union action must take account of them. All that need be said at present is that this link with outside industries exists alongside a great deal of "vertical" integration and amalgamation which, though not taken as far as in any single American firm, has been undertaken by nearly all the major British manufacturers since the war. This development, together with increasing automation has, I shall suggest, helps to multiply the unemployment caused by any given dispute. If, however, attention is centred on final car manufacture and assembly, it is obvious that, despite the presence of a substantial number of important high class car producers (Jaguar, Daimler, Rover, Rolls, etc.), the industry is now mainly concentrated in the five leading mass production firms: (British Motor Corporation—i.e. Austin-Morris—Ford, Vauxhall, Rootes, Standard-Triumph). Throughout this century the economic movement of an industry which began with many highly-skilled craftsman-producers has been towards this select company of giants, using the most advanced mass-production technology, each striving by concentration to render itself industrially self-sufficient between them controlling over 90 per cent of total, national motor car output.

It is against the background of this pattern of industrial organisation that the majority of motor car workers have had to frame their own measures, and their most characteristic problems and conflicts can only be explained in the light of it.

## II

For a movement which displays such redoubtable energy, trade unionism in the motor industry has a surprisingly short history. An official estimate of present membership is that in most important plants it is little less than 100 per cent and nowhere falls below 80 per cent, with the possible exception of Vauxhall. This membership is distributed among many different unions, but the bulk of the 'Shop Floor' operatives, skilled and otherwise, is organised by the Amal-

gamated Engineering Union, the Transport and General Workers Union, and a substantial minority by the National Union of Vehicle Builders. The sheer extent of union organisation was suggested by one local leader as being itself enough to draw the fire of hostile publicists. Certainly the rapid, determined struggle which has created it in less than a generation might well alarm the conservative. The fight for union organisation is in fact recent enough to be still a live issue for the men in the motor industry, many of whom have seen it through from the beginning, and to know something of its main features is to explain a great deal in their present mood and tactics.

## The Drive for Organisation

As late as 1936, G. D. H. Cole in his *Condition of Britain* described the motor industry as one of the most weakly-organised sectors of British trades unionism and J. L. Jones speaks of the "staggering lack of organisation" when he first went to Coventry in the pre-war years. This state of affairs, due largely to the comparatively recent arrival on the industrial scene of the motor car plants, was naturally encouraged by the employers, whose policies varied from the anti-union 'paternalism' of the Morris companies to the outright resistance of Fords. With little, in those years, to rely on but themselves, the motor workers began to force their organisations into the plants, and in the most up-to-date of 20th century industries, J. L. Jones and his colleagues re-enacted a battle for organisation that had been fought many times over by earlier generations. Management rarely granted official recognition until its hand was forced by some degree of existing organisation in the plant. To achieve this at a time when to become a trade unionist—much more to become a Shop Steward and recruit others as trade unionists—was not uncommonly to invite the sack, involved persistent picket-line and other pressure upon the numerous non-members and sometimes even concealment of membership until enough strength had gathered. Every successful penetration was a breach in the stand of the more recalcitrant managements upon whom the pressure of concessions elsewhere could be brought to bear; and as they gained ground plant by plant the motor workers learned the value, and the habit of shop floor action under shop floor leadership. Even so it needed wartime circumstances to bring some of the most important advances. The demand for munitions (to which the whole industry was diverted), the Essential Works Order and especially its associated Appeals Tribunals curbed employers' power of dismissal and put an end in particular to the previous wholesale firing of shop stewards.

By the end of the war the 1936 scene had been transformed. Trade union organisation was established throughout the firms, wages were high, the methods of negotiating piece work rates which, as we shall see shortly, are crucial in this industry had, in the words of

one member, "been revolutionised". The time-dishonoured practice of restricting wages by fiddling the piece rates had been stopped; a combination of prolonged local struggle and favourable wartime conditions had pushed rates and earnings well above the national minimum levels for the engineering industry as a whole.

The latest phase for the motor workers opened with a sharp setback at the end of the war, and was punctuated by the two recessions of 1951 and 1956. Between the closing down of munitions production and the present spectacular rise of the motor car a time lag occurred during which the gains both in membership and earnings were threatened. Many workers, drafted only for the duration, left the industry altogether, others returned to their former engineering jobs outside motor cars. Taking their union membership with them, they left behind a void. Add to this the tremendous intake, set off by the later post-war expansion, of workers from all areas of Britain and abroad, many of them unskilled and with no continuous experience of union membership, and as a veteran trade unionist observed: "we started with virtually a new labour force". The drive for organisation had to begin again, though from a much stronger position than before the war.

## Piece Rates and Fancy Payments

Rates of pay rather than rights of organisation have, however, been the rallying-point of the post-war come-back. The employers, keen to keep down costs in this (internationally) highly competitive industry, but also aware no doubt of the unions' relative loss of ground, adopted what most of the men declare to be a set policy of driving piecework wages down to the official national minimum levels which, as explained, had been long superseded by earlier gains. Once again a relentless plant-by-plant campaign was set in motion. This time the objective was not so much the drive for members and official recognition. The issues at stake lay right at the centre of day-to-day labour—detailed issues of piece rate calculation, bonus tariffs, overtime payments, differential earnings, issues that were relevant to this plant or industry and no other. The primary negotiating strength this time lay within the plant itself, and a premium was placed on the shop floor representative, the steward whose leadership and direct personal knowledge and interest, backed by his full-time officers, was becoming indispensable. Post-war experience has thus not only confirmed the pre-war lesson of the need for local initiative; it has established the role of the shop floor leader, in this industry at least, *as the only feasible arrangement*. Such attacks on the shop steward as are not dictated by interested malice are the product of simple ignorance.

A striking victory in the post-war campaign occurred when the Standard Motor Company, agreed to a piece rate tariff in excess of the national minimum, and after an ultimatum, was forthwith expelled from the

Engineering Employers' Federation. Afterwards a comprehensive wages agreement was concluded with the unions. (Standard is now back in membership, its good deed done.) But schisms between employers are what all good trade unionists pray for. This initial surrender to the workers' piecemeal, systematic pressure was followed in time by a series of separate plant agreements on piecework rates and bonus schemes, establishing the present chequered pattern of earnings in the industry. The final stimulus to recruitment was supplied by the employers when BMC, in the 1956 recession, declaring thousands of workers redundant, dismissed them with an insulting pittance, and thereby provoked a major strike. This episode and many others, similar, if less dramatic, accounts for much of the hostility, 'ostracism', etc. directed at the non-unionist.)

### III

As the figures already given show, the post-war struggle of the motor workers has resulted in impressive strength of organised numbers, and levels of earnings which have become famous. Looking backwards from the present time, it is not difficult to understand this outcome. Strategy demanded a "grass roots" campaign, in which the frontiers of struggle were certainly not those of the engineering industry in general, not even those of the motor industry as a whole, except as advances in one sector could be exploited in the local attack. The significant arena was the single plant, where the issues, present and tangible on every work-bench and assembly line, offered a direct appeal and stimulus. Drawing on such immediate sources of energy and interest, they were inevitably fought out with great success. Equally, inevitably, this system of plant bargaining and agreement, which even now is nowhere nearly so well-developed as in USA—(as some local union leaders believe it should be)—also produced a highly confusing patchwork of earnings and methods of calculating earnings. Amidst this confusion some great sectional disparities may have escaped public attention. All the world has heard of the well-paid men in motors, and true enough these are fortunately numerous. Fewer probably know of the chanciness governing the size of the wage packet. It is time to have a look at these earnings. First, it should be clear enough by now that for the earnings of an industry in which so much depends on local bargaining, little guidance can be sought from national wages agreements. At national level, the official negotiating body is the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, which negotiates and protects, among much else, the national minimum wage rates upon which the motor employers took their stand after the war. These minimums are important to the car workers as the basis from which much of their own bargaining begins. For the rest the Confederation, comprising 40 trade unions, represents the whole British engineering industry irrespective of

product or location. Motor workers have no separate national representation, nor do the Confederation agreements make any distinct provision for their industry. The motor employers on their side are correspondingly merged in the Engineering Employers' Federation (with the exception of Ford and Vauxhall).

The following figures are to be understood, however, not as nationally-negotiated rates but specifically as motor workers' earnings as they seem to emerge from the local bargaining medley. Their precise accuracy is not guaranteed—it is doubtful whether that is obtainable—but they attempt to strike a balance between various authoritative sources, official and unofficial, and, to the extent that generalisation is meaningful, yield an approximately accurate measurement of motor workers' 'prosperity'.

	<i>Ford*</i>	<i>Coventry and Birmingham Firms†</i>
Skilled Workers (hourly rate)	7/2	9/- to 10/-
Production Workers (semi-skilled) (hourly rate) ...	6/6	8/- to 10/-
Unskilled Workers (hourly rate) ... ..	5/8	5/6 to 6/-

The classification into Skilled, Production, and Unskilled Workers is that commonly adopted in the industry. They comprise respectively, tool room operatives and a whole range of highly specialised craftsmen; a variety of semi-skilled workers including assembly line operatives, machine operators, body workers, painters, etc.; general labourers. Two of the largest firms, Ford and Vauxhall, add to the prevailing diversity by paying no piece rates but a consolidated time rate.

### The Wages Tangle

The table shows something of the difference in earnings, not just between different grades but between the same grades in different areas, the West Midlands lead, for example, being quite marked. What no such table can more than hint at are the sharp differences both between and within grades and firms in the same local area. It can convey nothing of the bewildering multitude of fancy payments, premium payments, bonus payments, merit rates, overtime rates, etc., etc.,

\* *The rates of women workers at Fords, at 5/1 per hour, were said to compare very favourably with women's rates in the West Midlands.*

† *Coventry-Birmingham Firms—e.g. much of BMC; Rootes; Standard; many of the "specialist" car producers; and subsidiaries.*



a week, brought approximately 10/- per hour. (This limitation, a local works agreement between workers and management, exemplifies the localised character of bargaining: it does not apply e.g. in associated firms in the Oxford area.) His own earnings as a skilled worker he based on a rough calculation of 10/- per hour. Working the agreed 7½ hours overtime, he could expect a nett take-home pay of approximately £22 per week. "I'm not grumbling about the pay", he commented, "but remember that's for a 50 hour week. If anyone thinks such a stretch at my job is worth any less he's welcome to come and try it". There is no doubt that higher earnings than these can be and are being made in the industry but it would be worth knowing, though hard to assess, how much these depend on considerable overtime. A full-time union official declared that since the 1956 'redundancy' strike crisis, employers have met the demand for a more rational labour policy by falling back on overtime working.

### Differentials

If a factory-by-factory wage survey could be made, the £5 variation within this steward's own firm would be repeated and even exceeded. These variations are provocative enough when they exist between similarly-graded piece workers. Perhaps even more explosive are the differences between piece workers as a whole and the many time workers still found in the industry (apart from Ford and Vauxhall where, as already said, all earnings are on time rate). Time workers, with less opportunities of entering the bargaining melee, are decidedly worse off. In the 1948 agreement with Standard, referred to earlier, an attempt was made to rectify this difference by introducing a 'balancing bonus' for time workers, and short of scrapping the whole system in favour of a consolidated time rate for the whole industry, this perhaps offers the best solution. In the meantime, discontent is aggravated by great and wholly arbitrary gaps between piece and time workers in constant contact with each other. "Day workers", said the convenor, "are often working alongside piece workers, feeding them materials and so on. Naturally they feel a grievance about their poor wages and try to do something about it".

It should be stressed that none of these innumerable differential earnings corresponds, except in theory, to any differentials in skill. The first table above already reflects a clear advantage for at least some of the production workers, many of them classified as 'semi-skilled'. I myself have encountered instances, in circumstances which I have been able to check, of semi-skilled workers earnings substantially more than their skilled colleagues in the same firm, though how much this may have depended on heavy overtime working I am unable to say.

The differentials arise from the intensely localised system of wage negotiation, in which the area of the bargain to be struck will be no greater than the factory—perhaps only a department or a single group of

which, beyond the abstract basic minimum, make up these earnings. Here, and not in the 'wildcat' behaviour of shop stewards, we meet the most potent cause of the endless disputes.

To give a clearer picture, we may supplement the figures by the observations of local workers. A leading convenor estimated the average gross weekly takings (average 42½ hour week) at his own factory, one of the largest in the Midlands, as follows:

<i>Skilled Workers</i>	<i>Production Workers</i>	<i>Labourers</i>
£19-£20	£17 10s. 0d.	£10-£11

He warned, of course, against the limited value of generalisation: in many cases any one of these figures might be varied by as much as £5 a week. Discrepancies in his figures could arise from the sheer complexity of calculation; in any case he was speaking for no plant but his own. Overtime, limited in his plant to 7½ hours

operatives—and from the highly technical character of the industry and of the jobs to be assessed. Each mechanical operation has its appropriate place in the tariff, founded upon methods of measurement themselves not easy to agree and described by a union leader as “far from scientific”, and linked to one or other of the variety of rates and payments. Every serious technical change or innovation calls for a new negotiation and bargain. During the recent large scale capital re-investment and introduction of new models the managements, no less reluctant than the men to take advantage of complexity, were detected by one leader in what he felt was the old habit of pushing wages down nearer to the national minimum; and the distinct possibility arose of transferring more car manufacture to the Continent. (This is already taking place; a further reason is, of course, the employers’ anxiety to gain a foothold inside the tariff wall of the European Common Market.)

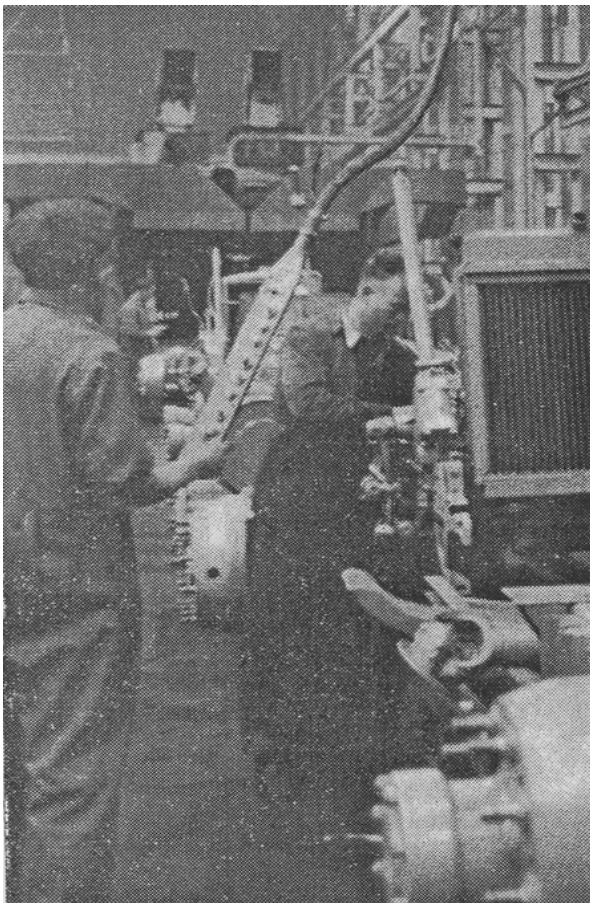
### No Room for Wildcats

The motor industry, in fact, has little room for ‘wildcats’; the existing possibilities for genuine and

serious dispute are boundless. The wages of a motor worker may be likened to an upturned pyramid; rising from the pin-point of the national minimum, his earnings—from the myriad of rates, bonuses and payments—are heaped together one on top of the other in a clumsy, precarious, uneven pile. The instability implicit in this structure deserves notice. For years before the war, motor workers had to reckon with the chronic ups and downs of an industry which regularly suffered unemployment for half the year. The industry has now abandoned the practice of producing in a rush for the summer season and the Motor Show and has attempted to arrange a more even flow of work. But twice in the 1950’s the workers have been hit by recession, and they are unlikely to forget the wholesale declarations of redundancy on the second occasion. The urge to build the pyramid higher and keep it in balance while the wind is fair, is hardly surprising.

It must also be realised that approximately half of present British car output goes for export. The economics of car production are such that nothing like the present scale of *home* output could be maintained without the support of the *overseas* market. A shop steward reminded me that the vitally important British car market in USA represents only a small percentage of total American car purchases: a relatively slight shrinkage of that total (say in a minor American recession) could have devastating effects on the British industry.

The main responsibility for this has again, of necessity, fallen on the shop steward. Familiar as no outside negotiator could be with the maze of bargaining agreements peculiar to his own shop, called upon as the most accessible union representative to intervene in every minute dispute, the stewards have not usurped official power so often as they have been forced willy-nilly to accept responsibilities for which there is often no other immediate authority or substitute. A prominent full-time official, himself unlikely to tolerate usurpation, dismissed such charges out of hand: “The steward’s role is dictated by the local character of the job. National and other outside agreements are of little help.” He also pointed to the shortage of full-time officers who could not possibly cope with every shop floor issue that arises. It is true that union officers are heavily overworked. The same officer expressed the view that the official procedure for settling disputes was not well adapted to allaying unofficial strikes. This procedure, like all national agreements, legislates for the whole engineering industry and not just the motor industry. It provides for discussion between employers and workers of every dispute in a series of ascending stages, pending settlement: from factory to the periodic meeting of the leaders of Employers’ Federation and the union executives. Strike action is forbidden until failure of settlement at the highest stage. The advantage of this method is held to lie in the removal of the dispute, at each stage, from the parties directly interested; and no doubt where the issues are fairly



generalised it serves its purpose. In the breakneck conditions of the motor industry, where everything depends on swift on-the-spot settlement of minutely detailed issues, the advantage lost by this time-consuming procedure has undermined confidence in it and encouraged unofficial action.

#### IV

The wages tangle, the scope for disputes, and the obligation of shop stewards have all been intensified by automation—possibly carried further in motors than in any other industry. Accelerated by the managements—or so many workers believe in response to the high wage levels—automation promises to revolutionise the composition and environment of the industry. “I’ve worked in the same shop at my firm for years”, said an AEU man, “in that time I’ve seen a new machine put in here, a new installation there. Sometimes I wake up and look around and wonder whether I’m still working in the same industry.” The drive for higher production at lower labour costs was illustrated by an official union estimate, which showed that output (which has grown by 400 per cent in 30 years) is now developing at an even faster rate. In June 1959 output was up 45 per cent on 1954 although twelve months earlier, in June 1958, the total labour force was slightly less than in June 1955. Recently the labour force has again grown but so again has output. Another AEU man said that during the ten years that he has worked at the same job the labour needed on his section had decreased from 180 men to 22 men; at the same time output has soared. (A recent *Financial Times* article forecast that within 5 years one company will produce cars by scientific methods at a reduction in costs of 25–40 per cent.) In all directions, automation can be a keen fertiliser of discord. Its purely technological effects threaten to play havoc with the traditional categories of craft skill and the extra rewards accruing to them. When the dividing line between old time skill and newer forms of mechanical proficiency becomes blurred, and when the sheer facts of the technical situation produce greater returns for the “semi-skilled”, trouble is hard to avoid. Even where craft and other differentials are clearly recognisable, the very novelty of the processes destroys all bargaining precedents and the “constant round of horse trading” reaches a new pitch.

To these new causes of irritation may be added the most celebrated and widely misunderstood of all the consequences of automation, namely the infinitely wider area over which the effects of any stoppage are liable to radiate. So highly-integrated and well-knit are the new automatic processes that the vast output of a whole huge company, even a group of companies, may be almost regarded as a single act of production—certainly of a very few vital acts. Failure or mistiming of performance at a key centre can quickly bring the whole machine to a halt. (Hence, to take a recent example, a strike of 55 BMC electricians rapidly put 30,000 men

out of work. Though the unions have suspected the employers’ eagerness to evoke public sympathy by laying-off strike-bound workers, even the President of ETU acknowledged that on this occasion the effects could not have been long delayed. It is also worth noticing the enhanced significance of the ‘white collar worker’ as a result of automation. Whole factories have been stopped because the vital paper work was left undone.) A relatively small dispute which would hitherto have remained isolated and obscure, but which is none the less urgent to the men concerned, might now reverberate throughout the automatic giant and paralyse it on the spot. The fact of technology, like so much else in the motor industry, accounts for what has been too readily attributed to selfishness and malice. This extension of workshop issues is giving rise to a clear need for more developed forms of workers’ shop floor organisation which has so far not been fully met. Under the new technological conditions, the unco-ordinated activities of dozens of separate shop floor groups could immobilise a plant in disputes too trivial to justify the drain on organised strength, and on the economic resources of both industry and workers.

#### Workshop Organisation

This helps to explain the growth in importance of the much publicised shop stewards inter-works or works combined committees. These are composed of the shop stewards from the same union in each factory, or factory group, who are summoned to regular meetings by a convenor elected from themselves. Similar meetings of stewards from different unions with a common factory interest are also held. Common problems are discussed, and an attempt is made to devise common policies on workshop issues. Deeply suspect in some quarters, where they are held as a ‘shadow’ trade union organisation to challenge the ‘constitutional’ union organisation, and at the same time to usurp the ‘prerogatives’ of management, these bodies do, in fact, fall some distance short of providing satisfactory co-ordination. Many stewards are, for this reason, unwilling to join them. But their existence and influence clearly expresses the urge of combined organisation among the motor workers to reflect the technological co-ordination of the motor industry, and they will continue to flourish until the official trade union structure is modified to admit some such organisation on a more recognised basis. In the meantime, shop stewards as a body, by helping to focus the workers’ interests in the most significant and effective way, are at the same time doing a great deal to keep the production lines in motion. “Half my time” said a key convenor—a noted and avowed militant—“is spent in damping down supposed grievances which have no foundation and wouldn’t give us a leg to stand on against the management. You can bet I get no thanks for it”. This remark I have heard echoed by stewards all over the industry. The same witness also dwelt on the problem of satisfying the

thousands of new entrants to industry and unions who have inherited, in the present prosperity, the fruits of a struggle of which they know nothing, often with no experience of disciplined organised action, (e.g. farm workers, casual labourers, foreign workers) but naturally interested as much in the future gains as the present benefits of union membership. Another con-venor, supporting these observations, strongly advocated a whole new trade union research organisation to study and frame a policy for the new form of industrial organisation ushered in by automation. (These two points, the claims of new members and automation-policy, were repeated by a full-time organiser.)

## Need for a Policy

If the future of men in motors is to be as secure as they deserve, measures are needed from both sides and, since so much depends on the employers, it would be wise for the unions to offer the example and initiative. A start might be made by defining the industry clearly, and then releasing it from the cramping partnership with the rest of engineering in the higher negotiating procedure, with which it has nothing in common—certainly on the central question of wages—and from which its problems can be clearly distinguished. Such a separation would require a correspondingly independent employers' body, but they are strong enough to stand on their own feet. At the very least there should be a separate motor workers' section within the wider Confederation. Such a change is all the more necessary in order to put the leadership of the workers squarely in the hands of men who understand the industry and its revolutionary techniques. Time and again I was told that national representation is all the more meaningless in that the leaders, trained in orthodox engineering skills and long departed from the shop floor, cannot comprehend present conditions. Full time leadership should go to men whose experience grows from regular contact with the plants.

This should be backed with a long term policy on automation, not only to eliminate the present feverish rule of thumb methods in the car industry, but also for the benefit of the whole movement as the new technology extends. Whether all this can be squared with a further trade union policy for the more rational use, and therefore production, of the motor car itself is as yet hypothetical. (This will be dealt with in Part II in the next issue.) I have come across no evidence of such a policy nor, at this stage, any interest in one. The men and their leaders are, of course, heavily preoccupied with problems of daily livelihood and, never forgetting for a moment the gloomy record of this industry, their main concern is less for the unlimited demand for motor cars than for the possibility of another sudden plunge into recession. To this the most responsible local leaders add a serious concern for the unqualified dependence of the West Midlands area especially on this unstable industry.

Given the economic ramifications of the industry, J. L. Jones estimates that not less than 25 per cent to 30 per cent of workpeople, in this huge area, to say nothing of their families and the widespread commercial and other services they support, are directly in, or dependent on, motor cars. Such considerations make it certain that any plan to rationalise the output and distribution of motor cars will have to overcome many inhibitions.

One way of dispelling the fear of instability would be for both workers and employers to agree on a realistic scale of time wages. This would not be initially popular with the men—everyone knows that Ford and Vauxhall earnings are lower. But apart from doing away with the gross sectional disparities and the nerve-wracking, acrimonious bargaining, it is hard not to feel that an equitable time rate has advantages which the employers may hesitate to yield. It may be guessed that, just as the men pile up their swaying pyramid of extra payments against a windy day, employers also cast a sneaking glance at future chances of pulling down the pyramid to the official minimum. In both cases the view is backwards—to the crises which have become built-in to the attitudes of this industry. A clean sweep of the "horse-trading", the recognition by employers that the high profits and output with low labour costs of automation imply an obligation to pay for a high workers' standard of living, an official time rate based on present prosperity earnings: these would be the surest indication of a context in which the men in motors could, with confidence, co-operate in rational social planning for the industry's impact on the community.

Most of all the employers—and the public—should learn to accept and respect the role of the shop steward. A key figure, whose status will and should increase as the most burning issues of advanced industry move more and more onto the shop floor, he most vividly represents the union to the men and the men to the world at large. Wilful and ignorant attacks on him are attacks on them and engender a defensive bitterness among them. Bitterness is the last mood in which industrial workers can be relied on for constructive social action and planning.

## V

Talk to anyone in Birmingham immediately after the melancholy election results, and you were offered a stock list of reasons for Labour's setback, each of which had some weight, but which, taken altogether, somehow left an unsatisfying gap.

First, one was told from union office to shop floor, Birmingham is traditionally a Tory city; until 1945 a Chamberlain stronghold, the post-war Labour majority of seats had never been more than an unusual breakthrough. It is true that, for a city which at times has been a radical centre, Birmingham has, of late, been politically backward; and a leading steward believed that this has been, if anything, reinforced by the previously unorganised "immigrant" (i.e. non-Birming-

ham) labour which has poured in to the booming motor industry.

High wage 'prosperity'—taking in the Macmillan cry of "one Nation"—was another favourite theme. Coupled with this was the even less well-documented, but hallowed, view that working-class wives, corrupted by spin-driers and other such acid dissolvents of class consciousness, had turned the scale decisively towards the Tories. This analysis, though supported by the official spokesmen of both the Labour and Tory local parties, is all the less acceptable for the lightning speed with which it was announced even before the national polls had closed. (*Birmingham Mail*, October 9, 1959.)

If, as an outside observer, one failed to get complete satisfaction from the sum of these various accounts, it was perhaps because—among many other vague portents—one was struck by the contrast between the vigour with which the motor workers as a whole press their industrial claims, and the relative failure to 'clinch' this in political, or at any rate, electoral action. Making every allowance for gross journalistic—and cinematic—exaggeration of the workers' "belligerence", it must be clear—even from this article—that shop floor conditions compel the motor worker to a constant effort to keep his end—especially his wage rates—up. In the strikes and disputes, official and unofficial, that do occur, and which highlight working-class issues in the plainest possible way, many of these Tory and politically apathetic workers must obviously take part.

"Of course they do" said a convenor, and scores of others to whom I put this point. "The trouble is they just don't link it up with politics and the way they vote. The youngsters, especially. It's partly our fault for not doing more to explain, partly they can't see what it's got to do with the Labour Movement anyway."

The "youngsters" i.e. those still in their early thirties, but especially those voting for the first time in the General Election, were a subject of sore concern wherever I went. An unofficial post-election survey in one division in Birmingham (a Tory gain by 20 votes) is reported to have shown that, of "young voters", not more than 5 per cent voted Labour; there was a very high abstention. Most said that they might have nothing against voting Labour next time. This general trend corresponds with my own observations.

## Political Attitudes

A pilgrimage in search of the prosperous, unofficial-striking, Tory-apathetic, young voting motor worker promised to take one further into the problem; and the following result is offered as a representative example (For space and other reasons I have chosen to give a rounded account of one discussion rather than snippets from many.)

Twenty-five years old, married with one child, highly-prepossessing, the 'young voter' in question is a clerk at one of the larger motor plants, who, like a number of clerical workers in the industry, has worked on the shop floor. Also a member of his union he had,

some weeks before the Election, taken part in a "white collar" strike—at first unofficial—for the purpose of securing a recognised wages structure in place of the ad-hoc, employer-dictated earnings system which is still too often the rule for clerical workers.

The strike, of which he spoke with evident relish (remember the new technology) rapidly brought most of the plant to a standstill, and was wholly successful. He added that of the 11 strikers in his immediate circle, 9—all under 35 years old—voted Tory at the subsequent election. The two remaining Labour strikers were 58 and 62 years old respectively. He himself and his wife voted Tory in October: his own parents as always, voted Labour, his father being a lifelong party worker. Asked the reason for his vote he answered immediately: "Nationalisation and Never had it so Good". Answers as pat off the front page as this—and the grin that came with it—help one to realise the limitations on the power of the "mass media"; they are far less successful in influencing actual behaviour than in supplying busy workers with sloppy ready-made excuses for action taken for far more serious reasons.

## Reluctant Socialists

Over a relaxed two-hour chat the fuller story came out. He "couldn't see anything much in the Labour programme that made him want a big change from the Tories!" Those pension schemes were "alright: like everything else they had to be paid for". And those other nationalised industries: he "couldn't see how they had benefited chaps like me much"—a very different criticism he agreed, from the 'front-page' one about the 'Menace' and 'Cost' of Nationalisation. As to the H-Bomb—"there doesn't seem to be much we can do about it, anyway". And, anyhow, on the Bomb—he "couldn't see much difference between Conservative and Labour—except Labour don't seem to know where they stand". He had heard of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, but had had no contact of any kind with it, and though unprejudiced, obviously did not think of it with any reference to himself. And when all was said and done about the Tory Press: "where *was* the money coming from for all those Labour schemes?" That promise not to put up income tax, for example: "I don't pay much myself, but how can they promise that?" He thought "they'll promise anything to get your vote". This last criticism came up time after time; and, even though every single one of these young critics unhesitatingly agreed that the same was true of the Tories, not one seemed to think it as culpable in their case; Labour was instinctively required to be the party of higher principle.

For the rest, the young clerk said finally, he didn't say he wouldn't ever vote Labour; in the meantime it was quite true he was "doing alright"; if anything went wrong they "could look after themselves", as they had done in the strike. When I asked—my one openly "leading" question—whether the strike itself didn't imply some political action to go with it, he grinned

openly and replied—his final remark—"I suppose so. But, you see, I suppose I am Labour anyway, really".

Taken as a whole, this discussion, like the entire series it represents, together with all the above 'stock' reasons for electoral failure—depressingly self-centred, a string of negatives, yet bearing at every point on concrete political issues—is a shameful indictment of those responsible for this political vacuum. It only remains to point to some more positive aspects.

## VI

In an article on *Coventry* in *The Times* last year the following statement, among others, occurred:

"The Coventry conception of high wages tied to productivity rather than individual skill, and of an identity of interest between labour and capital, so that the system is kept going at all costs, has much in common with American practice. Such ideas do not leave much room for political ideology on the factory floor, and many people in the city believe that in this respect they are in the forefront of another industrial revolution in Britain."

Leaving aside the misleading, though popular, comparison with America, this statement embodies an important half-truth, the other half of which the writer was not concerned to notice. (His viewpoint was sufficiently represented by his headline—"One Class City of Coventry"—and, a little further on in the same article, he unwittingly quoted a Coventry trade union official as saying: "Our prosperity, impressive though it is, could vanish into thin air almost overnight".) If this article has fulfilled its intention it has shown that men in motors, almost from the very beginning of their short history, are ceaselessly aware of that fragile bubble of prosperity which even a *Times* correspondent cannot ignore, and constantly engaged, today and every day, in the shop floor pressure for the wage rates.

Bereft of a guiding political compass the struggle for high wages and job security, which 'Tories', Socialists and 'apathetic' will alike fight and strike for, can easily be presented, as it is by *The Times* writer and many others, as a-political 'American' materialism. To some extent, granted the same want of political bearings, it may actually become so—the most socially-conscious motor worker will acknowledge that many thousands of his mates who "can't see what it's got to do with the Labour Movement, anyway"—are in it to "make hay", while the season lasts. But to start one's political analysis from this attitude—ignoring the basic factory floor issues from which it springs—is the politics of the philistine.

Car workers, foremost in the whole of industry, fight their primary political battles over 'bread and butter' problems of employment rights and wage packets. These are very 'material' problems, to be sure—since when has this become a novelty in politics? Shorn of a clearly relevant political context, given instead a Labour programme in which "a chap like me couldn't see much to make me want a big change from the Tories", the battle will begin and end there. The high-minded may then scorn the worker for his

"class materialism", the *Times* approve his lack of 'ideology'.

Even more striking is the failure, among all the talk about 'forms of public ownership', to notice that, in this advanced industry, the workers, to meet their own day-to-day needs, are already developing their own forms of technically-significant organisation. Few of Mr. Crossman's Coventry constituents would disagree with him that the existing nationalised boards "are neither fish nor fowl" (Mr. Crossman in the April, 1960 *Encounter*) and nationalisation is probably a far cry from the motor industry. Meanwhile, as this article has already suggested, the combined shop stewards' organisations alone, are supplying an element of essential technical co-ordination, the disappearance of which the employers themselves would live to regret.

## Politics of The Shop Floor

All the more deplorable is the crippling, self-inflicted fracture which splits completely these urgent industrial working-class issues from the current top policy discussions in the Labour Party. Mr. Gaitskell's Blackpool disquisition on the new "telly and frig" working-class, Mr. Crosland's fastidious analyses of the "post-Capitalist State", alike speak of a commendably diligent reading of all the latest works on automation, a careful scrutiny of the wage returns and new housing lists, the retail purchasing levels and the hire purchase figures. They also reveal a stupefying ignorance of the everyday factory-floor lives of their rapidly-diminishing supporters. Haunted by the desertion of many such as my young clerk, they are like men who want an increase in the family, but have forgotten the facts of life. They try to bring the thing off by re-furnishing the nursery. Their methods are not so much those of theology as of witchcraft; no wonder they begin to weary the commonsense of practical working men.

If the historical experience of the motor workers—so far as they represent the "new" working class—proves anything at all it is this: that, left to themselves without meaningful political leadership, industrial workers will not simply lapse into inactivity; they will form their own organisations—or use existing ones—and fight on the issues that stare them in the face. If this produces political confusion—too bad for the movement.

For the Left, too, there are lessons. At its peril the New Left must avoid any inclination to recoil from the sheer fact of 'prosperity', tasteless though some of its manifestations are. This inclination has not always seemed absent from some attitudes and, confusing material well-being with false "materialism" of values, is the mirror reflection of that philistinism which takes 'prosperity' as the sole guide to policy. Nothing could divide the New Left more surely from a working class whose prosperity—such as it yet is—is hard-won and precarious enough; or from a Socialist tradition which has historically seen the emancipated worker as the only sure guarantor of a truly creative Socialist culture.

# 1. Railways And The Transport Muddle

John Hughes

BY THE time this article sees the light of day, we will all have had a surfeit of material on the railway problem. Why should *NLR* join in? One answer is that this is an outstanding example of the conflict between the values and criteria of commercialism and those applicable if social need is used as a guide. Here is a case where commercial accounting gives all the wrong answers. Secondly, it illustrates the contradictions that nationalised industries are caught up in within a mixed economy dominated by commercial interests. Moreover, here is a question which affects the whole fabric of our lives in a highly urbanised country, one that we will increasingly *suffer* from, and the Labour movement has no policy. True, Harold Wilson (*New Statesman*, 5 March, 1960) has written about railway financing, but what he has to say does not go to the root even of that problem, and he has very little to say in the context of broader problems of transport policy. The NUR, and all credit to it, has written a very effective pamphlet—*Planning Transport for You* (NUR 1/—)—but this still does not avoid being railway-minded instead of transport-minded—nor is there any sign that there is any agreement in sight between them and other transport Trade Unions (notably the T & G) as to what should be done.

Some ideas as to the trends we have to allow for when discussing future transport policy can be gleaned if we glance at the experience of the USA. There, a commercial profit-and-loss accountancy has reigned supreme in transport, and under such pressures urban public transport systems have become vestigial, the cities have been re-shaped as 'strip cities' to fit the requirements of the motor car, and still—after enormous investment in roads at the expense of other public services—urban roads are congested, traffic crawls, air contamination becomes an increasing problem, and uncontrolled use of the motor car calls for further vast

PROFITS AND ASSETS*				
B.M.C.	£million	1955	1957	1958
Total Profit		23.9	12.5	26.1
Paid Out		2.5	2.6	2.6
Net Assets		59.6	63.4	70.4
FORD MOTOR				
Total Profit		22.4	26.7	35.4
Paid Out		1.7	2.0	2.0
Net Assets		60.6	74.3	85.6
VAUXHALL				
Total Profit		14.5	5.4	13.6
Paid Out		2.1	—	—
Net Assets		55.3	55.3	56.3
* <i>Labour Research</i> , March 1960				

expenditure on road building. This in a country that has the space that we lack. The other day I met a professor from Los Angeles who argued that the fact that his family had two cars was not a sign of a high standard of living but of the high cost of transportation.

In Britain we move swiftly towards an overwhelming problem of transport, and the danger of a diversion of resources on an enormous scale towards a roads programme that will solve nothing. Urban public transport, and the railways, are in decline. Our congested roads are confronted with a car industry rapidly expanding its output capacity to nearly 3 million vehicles a year. This process is welcomed as bringing employment to development areas, although it is based on each company assuming it will increase its share of the market! Faced with the surplus capacity and under-employment of the motor car industry by 1962–63, will it be easy to resist the campaigns of the road lobbies (behind them, the oil companies) for a massive diversion of resources? This expansion programme (£160 million over two years) is being heavily subsidised by Government loan: is it really a *first priority*, while the modernisation of the railways remains undone—or is the community once again in the hands of the motor industry? This estimated capacity of 3 million vehicles is well beyond estimated demand, even if that demand continues to expand, at home and overseas, at the same rate as in previous years. Will we find ourselves, financ-

Road Accidents: 1955/1959		
	1955	1959
Fatal:	5,255	6,140
Non-fatal:	211,426	255,076
TOTAL:	216,681	261,216

Road Casualties: 1955/1959		
	1955	1959
Killed:	5,526	6,520
Injured:	262,392	326,933
TOTAL:	267,922	333,453

ing a massive “two-cars-in-the-garage” advertising campaign, encouraging the society to “take up the slack”, buying back at a fast rate of obsolescence in 1962, the cars it helped the motor manufacturers to build in 1960? Will it be easy to impose restraints on the use of private cars in city centres, especially as growing congestion by slowing traffic down makes bus transport more costly and less reliable in terms of timetable? As a community we have taken a few hesitant steps from *laissez-faire* towards urban planning, only now to find our limited attempts at urban control swamped by the new aspect of urban *laissez-faire*, the private car and all the vested interests that surround it.

Where then do the railways fit in? What is to be done?

## Two General Propositions

All the complexities of railway policy need to be related to two general propositions. Firstly, the railway system exists, it represents a vast input of *past* capital, and consequently we will be *under-utilising* it if we divert traffic from the railways by charging the users more than the current operating costs. This is in fact what we do at present: the Transport Commission tries to earn a surplus over current costs where it can, even if that involves diverting passengers and freight from the railways. It is merely orthodox economic doctrine—although the orthodox economists are strangely silent on this one—to say that capital charges derived from the past (inescapable costs) should not be considered in a pricing policy aimed at the best use of the existing railway apparatus. A transfer payment on capital account has to be made by somebody, but that should not stand in the way of a rational use of public property. The proposal of Harold Wilson that the state take over capital charges but charge railways a rent based on ‘ability to pay’ is an unhelpful proposal because it does not make its criteria clear; it is still, in fact, viewing the problem in terms of commercial accounting, and would envisage creating new publicly owned capital equipment and then under-utilising it.

The second general proposition that railway policy needs to be based on, is adequate consideration of the *social cost* of diverting traffic from rail to road. It is not a question of comparing tariffs based on average rail costs as against average road costs. It is not a question of the costs that the ‘consumer’ of road transport is directly aware of (taxation, the cost of road congestion and delay to him). The costs relevant to the community are those that the community will bear as a result of *additional* traffic on the roads in the 1960’s—congestion on trunk routes and in urban centres pushed to the point of intolerable conditions, the resources committed on massive road building programmes, the increased death-roll. By contrast, a diversion of additional traffic to railways would carry no such social costs, and would lead to more efficiency with less under-utilisation of the system. Simply, we have under-capacity use of the railways at present, and over-capacity use of the roads. If the pricing system is to be used to secure the allocation

of traffic to different types of transport, it ought to be a pricing system that reflects social costs as well as direct operating costs.

The general propositions, then, lead to the conclusion that attention to social needs, and the handling of additional traffic with the *least* call on material resources, requires the operation of the railways at charges for passenger and freight traffic that will not yield revenue enough to cover operating costs. This creates a minor transfer problem—who pays? The alternative of diverting additional traffic to the road system involves both a transfer problem—who pays?—and also a massive diversion of real resources. At present, for the railways even to cover operating costs, let alone attempt to make a surplus, would be economically wasteful and anti-social. It is strange, to say the least, that a Government which can ‘find’ £1,600 million on defence (including a four-minute warning of our extinction) considers it unthinkable that it should be asked to provide from the Treasury a subsidy of £100 to £150 million per annum, which is needed if we are to have even the beginnings of a sane transport policy (with *no* diversion of resources!)

## The Lunacy of Transport Finance

The finances of the railways are at present quite lunatic in character. First, the heavy compensation burden (£42 million per annum). In addition the capital cost of an investment programme which is swollen both by *borrowing at high interest rates* and *buying from private sector firms at high profit rates*. Here is our mixed economy. A railway system that does not even find it possible to pay decent wages and cannot meet its capital charges, is subjected to a double transfer in its payments for the investment programme; it is exploited both by the moneylender and by the private contractor (outside contracts for diesels, while railway workshops decline). Thirdly, current deficits (partly caused by the government’s own past pressure on prices and investment spending) are not written off but instead are capitalised, i.e. the money is borrowed at high interest rates for future repayment. But the railways, as they are making deficits, cannot pay the interest on these new ‘loans’. So the railways are advanced money to pay the interest—and on this too they will have to pay the interest! So we have them—literally—borrowing money to pay the interest on the interest on the money borrowed to pay the interest on compensation stock. That’s where we are. Mark you, if the railways *did* succeed in paying it all, it would mean they were pursuing a pricing policy economically disastrous to the community.

A word on structure. In a situation where commercial accounting is the least reliable guide as to what should be done, the Conservatives proclaim ‘competition’. This has even led to justify it, since what is needed is the *linking*—the ‘integration’—of rail and road transport, both passenger and freight, with road transport feeder services to rail-heads. At last on the railways some appreciation is dawning of the potential-

ities, e.g. of standardised containers transferable from road to rail with a minimum of equipment and labour use, of express freight services with guaranteed delivery times, There is less to show yet in the field of passenger traffic. But clearly a linked transport service, with interchange of freight and passengers between co-ordinated road and rail services, is hardly likely to appear as the result of 'competition'. Hence the importance of restoring the road fleet to the Transport Commission—but *not* within the 1948 structure. For, *separate* Road and Rail Executives were not exactly the way to get speedy integration either. The structural answer would seem to be *Area Transport Authorities with close liaison with municipal transport services*—and with rather fewer of the local big business and chamber-of-commerce men who at present dominate railway boards.

A word on charging. At present on the railways it is largely a case of 'charging what the traffic will bear', while preserving so far uniformity of charge per mile for passengers. The railways, trying to pick up a surplus where they can, have particularly done so at the expense of the main-line express passenger. Costs to the railways on inter-urban express trains are generally very low, but these passengers are penalised to subsidise costs per passenger mile on branch lines (where it is not an exaggeration to say that a taxi service would often be cheaper to operate). The high fares on long distance rail travel divert passengers to private car use, or to long distance buses, although these cost *more* per passenger mile to operate. Clearly, there is an urgent need to bring down passenger fares on express main line routes to the *1d. a mile* or so of actual operating cost in order to win passengers from the trunk roads. There is no comparable economic case for subsidisation of branch lines, though there clearly is a case for giving

rural areas an adequate public transport system of some sort (road or rail bus, with passengers and freight?)

## Towards a Transport Policy

To sum up, the elements of a transport policy to fit social needs rather than vested interests would seem to be:—

1. Removal of capital charges from railways.
2. Reduction and rationalisation of railway charging.
3. Public decision as to how much of main operating costs should be recovered from various types of rail users, depending on an assessment of the social costs involved if traffic goes by road instead of rail.
4. The integration of rail freight and passenger services with road freight and passenger bus and car hire services.
5. The limitation of the use of private cars in city centres (as has begun tentatively and indirectly in London) together with the subsidisation and improvement of municipal bus services, and suburban rail services.
6. A long hard look at the phasing of expansion in the motor car industry (using building licensing) to ensure that there is not a sequence of inflationary bunching of investment spending followed by a long and deflationary gap. To ensure also that the emphasis is on expansion for models which in design and in marketing expenditure are aimed particularly at meeting the needs of overseas markets.
7. As for a roads programme—the first priority ought to be the bypassing of the many towns large and small at present deluged and overwhelmed by heavy through traffic.

## 2. The Health Service Revisited

Sheila Lynd

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE has existed now for nearly 12 years, and already it is hard to remember what being ill was like before. It is almost impossible today to awaken the imagination of the post-war young to what a frightful, unforeseeable blow a serious or prolonged illness was to a family before the war, and they can hardly credit that the panel system covered only wage-earners of the lower income groups, and even then excluded wives and children. In those days no working class mother was ever free to call in a doctor to her children without asking herself, "Is it

something serious, or would it be better to spend the money on oranges, extra milk, or coal for a bedroom fire?" followed by self-reproachful panic if the child got worse or others fell ill. In millions of families, a measles epidemic was a nightmare.

Is it not astonishing, then, that when you see an article on the Health Service anywhere today it is most likely either to be a biting examination of what is wrong with the NHS, or a scandalised fulmination about its cost—or sometimes both?

Nevertheless the great social advance achieved by the

introduction of the National Health Service in 1948, is now freely admitted, even by the leaders of the British Medical Association who, up to then, fought hardest against the terms of service. In the Special Supplement which the *British Medical Journal* devoted to surveying its first ten years (July 1958), Dr. Guy Dain—redoubtable in the fight for the sanctity of the family doctor—admitted,

“From the point of view of the consumer—that is, every inhabitant of the country, whether Britisher or visitor—it has been an enormous benefit and success . . . The absence of any financial barrier between doctor and patient must make the doctor-patient relationship easier and more satisfactory.”

In the same issue, that indefatigable old Tory, Lord Moran commented:

“All three political parties were committed to provide a health service for the country. It was in short politically inevitable. Moreover it was unavoidable on account of finance. The hospitals were, broadly speaking, bankrupt; they could not have carried on without large government grants.”

Yet having admitted so much, the political leaders of the medical profession went on to call for a halt to “soaring expenditure” before the necessary expenditure on our admittedly “bankrupt” hospitals had properly begun; for a shifting of the burden onto the shoulders of those who use the service, and a gradual nibbling away at the free-for-all nature of the service which is fundamental to it. Some of this nibbling, of course, began with the prescription and other charges introduced by the second Labour government, now widely criticised throughout the Labour movement.

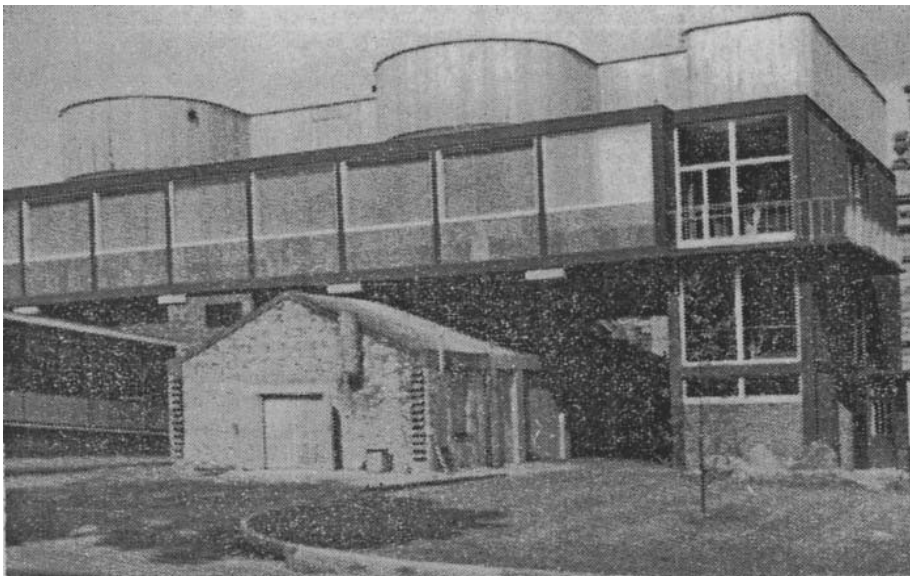
The medical profession in short—despite the efforts of such bodies as the Socialist Medical Association and the opinions of thousands of individual doctors—still has a deeply ambivalent attitude to the NHS: the businessman’s inborn horror of high taxation wrestling with the pride any scientist and healer must take in the great leap forward that health and medicine have taken since the war.

In fact, if a world-wide survey of what the nations spend on health were taken, we might well find that our “ruinous” allotment of 3½ per cent of the national income to the NHS works out at less than many countries where the individual pays for his own ill-health, or pays health insurance to profit insurance companies.

Medical science has never moved forward so fast as it has since the war—so fast in fact that it has been said that in ten years’ time we shall know that half the things we believe in now are wrong—and we don’t know which half!

At the same time, in every country which has escaped the clutch of general malnutrition (but let us remember that this is *not* yet true of the majority of the world’s peoples) there has been a great advance in general health. The fall in infant and maternal mortality rates, which started during the war with full employment, rationing and cheap milk, reaches a new low level every year. TB incidence has fallen steadily, largely for the same social reasons, but also because of widespread check-up and mass radiography. Today, children are protected from a whole series of infectious diseases, diphtheria, whooping cough, TB, polio.

But for these rising standards of health, one wonders how the doctors and the hospitals of 1948 could have coped with the flood of patients when they became free-for-all? As things were, the Health Service was temporarily swamped by the huge, unpent demand for spectacles and dentures, the things the elderly members of the population had always needed so frightfully and had largely to do without. Treated by the Tory papers at the time as evidence of the shameful greed of the irresponsible millions when offered something for nothing (and promptly discouraged by the imposition of charges), this was the clearest evidence of how desperately the new Health Service was needed.



*Piecemeal extensions, a costly “economy”. At the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, new operating theatres (designed by Basil Spence & Partners) had to be built over the old operating theatre, seen below, which continued in use throughout the rebuilding*

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No one in fact has benefitted more from the Service than the old people, and the fact that they can now get treatment is reflected in intensified research into rheumatic diseases, and in the development of a totally new speciality, geriatrics. It is also worth pinpointing one small but immense advance—that made in deaf aids since the Act. The first NHS model was a machine weighing 24½ oz.: by 1957 this had been replaced by a transistor set weighing only 3 oz., including battery. In that time the nation had bought half a million deaf aids, enough to make research into their improvement well worth while. Everybody has benefitted from such an advance, including the richest old woman in Eastbourne who despises the Health Service and objects to paying taxes for it as she also pays her doctor.

## Bankrupt Stock

Just as the nation took over a bankrupt and outdated railway system, and coal mines needing millions for mechanisation, the National Health Service inherited largely out-dated, bankrupt and inadequate stock. But whereas in taking over the mines and railways the Labour Government had the hearty support of the workers in those industries, in the case of the health service the key workers—the doctors—were one of the most highly organised bodies of Tory-minded awkward cusses that ever had their industry nationalised under them.

While unwillingly acknowledging that both public health and the state of the hospitals made nationalisation a necessity, the British Medical Association determined from the first to fight for the best possible conditions of service for its members, and to retain their rights, not as doctors or scientists but as business men holding valuable property, to “do what they liked with their own.”

On two issues the BMA was adamant: they refused absolutely to accept the idea of a salaried service for general practitioners, and they demanded the doctor's right to buy and sell practices where he liked. It is astonishing to remember that in 1945 even the Minister of Health of the National Government was convinced that a salaried service was the only way to ensure an adequate network of GPs all over the country, instead of allowing doctors to establish or buy their practices in agreeable places where the money was—Bath, Bournemouth and the cosy South—while the North and the industrial towns were permanently short of doctors. Who wouldn't prefer to work in a prosperous place and send in his bill in guineas, rather than toil in a lock-up surgery among dingy shops, and have to hold out his hand and ask for 3/6d. please every time he saw a patient not on the panel?

Twice the BMA got up and walked out of discussions on the salaried service, and it was Aneurin Bevan, the first Labour Minister of Health, faced with actually getting the new Health Service going, who compromised with the doctors, accepting the present capitation fee basis of private practice and in exchange persuading

the doctors to sell their right to sell their practices, for a lump sum.

If Bevan at that time had appealed to every individual doctor to apply for a salaried job in the new Service or opt right out of the NHS when it started, perhaps a number would have come in that would have surprised the BMA, if not immediately, then as soon as it became clear that almost the entire population intended to use the service. But at the time nobody realised how completely the middle class would come in. It was a game of poker, and Bevan put his cards down first.

Today less than 5 per cent of the British people are private patients, and only 600 GPs throughout Great Britain live on private practice only, though many have a short list of private patients, to enable them to live comfortably on less than the permitted maximum of capitation fee patients.

There were, of course, more than 3,500 people per doctor in the population of Britain before the war and, in some under-doctored areas, many more; but then, many of these could not afford treatment when they needed it, and only came in case of serious illness. So today, while the population is very much better cared for, many GPs feel desperately overworked and some blame the Health Service for the queues in their waiting rooms, the short interviews and scrappy treatment they have to give, the paper work involved in sending people on to hospitals and clinics, keeping records, consulting specialists, and so on.

They should, of course, be rejoicing that now these people are able to come, able to be sent to hospitals and seen by specialists: the solution to overwork is clearly more doctors, and not ways of discouraging patients from coming in about “trivialities”: the point about trivialities is that only the doctor can say what is trivial.

## The Overworked GP

But at present the life of a GP is not easy. A very conscientious doctor told me,

“I feel that general practice today is so haphazard that sometimes one is almost practising a confidence trick, satisfying the patient without treating the medical problem. We have not the facilities, or the time, for proper examinations, so if we are conscientious we have to send people on to the out-patients department, or if we are not we give a pill to keep him running.”

He listed as necessary adjuncts of general practice today, besides fewer patients, a proper appointments system, full examination facilities, laboratory facilities at hand, sterilisation equipment, and secretarial help. All this would be possible to doctors working together in group practices or at health centres—seen as the key to an adequate GP service in the 1948 Act, but put out of bounds when the salaried service was abandoned.

“I would join a group practice tomorrow”, added this particular doctor, “but there isn't another doctor in this area who would come in.”

The group practices established number only about

200 throughout the country. All sorts of personal reasons can hold up such amalgamations as well as old-world individualism, but the incentive offered by the N.H.S. from a group practice building fund is extremely slight and could not be increased.

Yet when we recall the promised Health Centres, which were to have been the key to an integrated Health Service, combining the family doctor with the local public health and welfare services, laboratories, school dental service and so on, we realise how much we have lowered our sights since 1948. Barely half a dozen health centres have been built throughout the country—and in opening the last one in London, on Woodberry Down Estate, the Tory Minister of Health, in 1951 boasted that he would have “stopped it” had he been in time to do so.

Bruce Cardew, general secretary of the General Practitioners Union, in a recent Fabian pamphlet on *The Future of the Family Doctor*, made the following estimate of how much time a doctor working eight hours a day spends on an average with each patient, given the maximum capitation list of 3,500 patients. In summer, Dr. Cardew claims, he deals with 33 visits in his surgery and sees 16 patients a day at home. In winter he sees 55 daily in the surgery and 28 at home, working out at an average time spent per patient of 7.3 minutes in the surgery or 15 minutes at home—in summer; and at 4.4 minutes per patient in the surgery and 11.7 minutes at home in winter.

The pamphlet goes on to expose how the present system of payment discourages GPs from improving the service they provide: the doctor is paid a flat rate per patient per year (so the more visits a patient pays him, the less per visit he earns), and his expenses are calculated not on his own expenditure but by averaging out each year the expenses of GPs throughout the service. The result is a positive disincentive to spending anything on improving the comfort and equipment of his surgery, employing a secretary or a nurse, for it is the GP with the lock-up surgery and chairs for waiting patients in the passage who will do best out of his expenses allowance.

## The Hospitals

In 1948, the National Health Service took over 1,334 voluntary hospitals with 117,000 beds and 1,771 municipal hospitals with 427,000 beds in England, Wales and Scotland. It also inherited 66,000 beds in workhouse infirmaries. In some areas, not only was there a serious shortage of beds, but the standard of many of the hospitals themselves was fearsome. The 1945 Hospital Survey which reported on them flatly to the Minister of Health commented of hospitals in the North West of England, “considering the high place which England takes in the medical world, perhaps the most striking thing about them is how bad they are.” Of hospitals in South Wales it reported that many were “so old and so badly designed that they cannot be regarded as worth retaining”.

Nevertheless, they had for the time being to be retained, and most of them have been retained ever since. Many of them now stand amid a formless encampment of extensions and additions, with laboratories and out-patients tucked into army huts, and hospital staffs housed far away, adding miles of walking to their work each day. It was obvious that enormous sums had to be spent to bring the hospitals up to standard and make them efficient, but mend and make-do instead of replacement started because so many houses and schools had to be built too and were given priority. This trend continued as successive Governments, all busy with their growing genocide programme, tried to cut expenditure on the Health Service instead of to expand it. Soon, not even running repairs and cleaning of obsolete buildings could be maintained. Screaming loudly about the cost of it all, each successive Government spent *less* on hospital building than had been spent before the War.

Soon after their return to Government, the Tories appointed an “economy” committee to seek out and expose all the extravagances of the Health Service: the Guillebaud Committee set to work and then reported that so far from being run extravagantly, *the Service must have much more money to run at all*. It estimated that instead of spending less than £10 million a year on a highly extravagant patchwork of extensions to obsolete hospital buildings, a minimum of £30 million a year must be spent on new hospitals. For every £1 million spent on patchwork, they pointed out, there was an increase of £400,000 in running costs, whereas £1 million spent on a new hospital entailed an addition of only £150,000 to running costs. Could penny-wisdom go further?

## Damning Report

It was not, however, until the medical profession itself, through the BMA, put its foot down about the state of the hospitals that things began to move: and here “the consumer” can thank his stars that the medical profession is as stiff-necked and well-organised as it is. The doctors’ revolt, carried through in their professional journals, conferences, clubs and dinner parties, the unassailable facts that they collected and published in their *Report on Hospital Building* in April 1959, and finally the approach of a General Election, forced the Government to promise the necessary expenditure to enable the hospitals to do their job. This Report on Hospitals made utterly clear what the Health Service was suffering from—malnutrition. It not only summed up the sad state of the hospitals, but presented an outline of what would be needed to provide an adequate service throughout the country.

The hospitals, it pointed out, were treating 30 per cent more patients than in 1948, yet the number of hospital beds had increased only 6 per cent—the difference being accounted for by the much shorter stay most patients now have to make. In spite of this increase the waiting list for hospital beds was still

growing: in 1957 the hospitals treated 3,794,000 in-patients, 55,000 more than in 1956. But at the same time waiting lists increased by 9,000 to 440,000. Admissions to mental hospitals are going up too, but here the numbers in hospital are falling steadily, as more and more patients come in voluntarily, and by seeking treatment earlier are so much the more quickly discharged. Nevertheless, the *Hospitals Report* pointed out that 10,000 old people are slowly dying in the overcrowded mental hospitals because there is nowhere else to put them. The *Report* went on to demand the demolition of those vast, isolated, old lunatic asylums, still in use but totally unsuited either to providing out-patient treatment or efficient therapy for in-patients, and to urge that mental illness should be treated in a department of the general hospitals. This principle has since been accepted in the new Mental Health Act, but when will the demolition begin? The cost of a building programme to meet all these needs, the BMA estimated at £750 million, and suggested a ten-year plan to complete the job. This has now been all but adopted by the Macmillan Government, after knocking off £5 million a year for luck.

## Priorities in Research

There is another important part of medicine which has been shamefully short of cash and for which no great new programme of expansion has been planned—medical research. Of £300 million a year spent on research of all kinds in this country, just £8 million goes to medical research (with £50 million on civil research, and £240 million on military research). Here one would think Lord Hailsham might well ring a warning bell. But so far, total silence from the Minister of Science.

It may be said that the various drug manufacturers are spending at least four times as much again on research, and doubtless they make a useful contribution to the development of new drugs, which they sell through the NHS at a very handsome profit. The fact remains that in spite of spending so much more on research, the drug houses have made no basic medical discoveries whatever: all these have come from research at the universities and research institutes of the NHS. How much of the money spent by the private manufacturers in this field, one wonders, goes into basic research at all, and how much into duplicating each other's work, or chasing a new antibiotic which will be sufficiently different from an existing one to qualify for a new patent? To judge by the daily flood of glossy literature, advertising blotters and free samples from the drug houses that choke every doctor's letter-box, the wastage is colossal. And the payment for all this, which is included in the cost to the nation of its drugs, is the one bit of gross extravagance the Health Service could well afford to cut out. Yet one never hears those who cry out for economy demand, as the first most practical economy measure, the nationalisation of this industry.

Yes, we need more research, with fewer flag days to pay for it (and I always wonder how much could be raised for missile research if it depended on flag days for support?). But even more the Health Service needs *more people*. Since the BMA threatened to organise a walk-out of the Service unless doctors' salary grievances were raised, a Royal Commission has proposed increases, which Parliament has accepted and which most people will feel are pretty handsome, but do not grudge the profession.

But what of the Other Ranks? Hospitals are short of nurses, orderlies, cooks, almoners, and trained people of all kinds, but nurses above all. They are pleading for married women to work part-time. If it were not for the chance our Health Service offers to girls to learn while they earn, which brings a stream of young trainees from Ireland, the West Indies and West Africa, it is hard to imagine how some of the hospitals would be staffed at all. It is a fine thing that Britain trains nurses to go back and improve the health services of their own countries: it is a danger to our own health service that it pays too little to attract our own girls into nursing, and relies upon the lower living standards of other countries to fill the gap. The doctors are well organised, but the others are scarcely organised at all, apart from those in the Public Health Departments, and the male nurses in the mental hospitals. Yet unless attractive wages and conditions are established to bring more people into the Hospital Service, it can never do its job—not even with £70 million a year spent on new hospitals.

HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION AS % OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT: 1956-7	
COUNTRY	%
Canada	.45
Sweden	.42
Norway	.24
U.S.A.	.20
Ceylon	.16
England and Wales	.07

But already the moan about astronomical costs has become a howl: £70 million a year on hospital building, £12 million a year more on doctors' salaries... *how can we possibly pay for all this?* It seems horribly possible that this Government, having at last been forced to make these concessions, may soon be asking people to foot the bill with all kinds of increased charges. Since the NHS was established we have already had two increases in the weekly Insurance payment.

But the BMA itself has already put forward more drastic ideas than that. While praising the Health Service as "an unqualified success", Dr. Guy Dain urged, in his Tenth Anniversary article, that there should be a fee-per-service charge: "Both doctors and patients would seem to set a better value on a service

if some payment was made at the time." In the same issue of the *British Medical Journal* Dr. Ronald Winton wrote enviously of the Australian Health Service, where, "various social services provide for those with genuine needs, but a premium is still put on self-reliance and independence of spirit." I seem to have heard that rather often in the past, in defence of the old Means Test. *The Economist* went further, in two special articles surveying the First Ten Years, the whole tenor of which was not that the service had been starved of cash but that it had cost far too much. This is a very disturbing trend. What are the facts?

"Between 1949 and 1958, the gross cost of the NHS rose from £435.1 million to £736.7 million, which represented a falling percentage of the National Income ("gross national product") from 3.96 per cent to 3.71 per cent. At the same time, patients' payments went up from £4 million to £34.4 million, National Insurance contributions from £40 million to £105 million, rates from £15 to £30.8 million, and net cost to the taxpayer from £344.8 million to £530.7 million."

Instead of criticising this trend to transfer more and more of the burden to the Class V unskilled worker, who must pay his increased National Insurance and his dentist and prescription charges just like any Class I businessman, the *Economist* demanded an end to such petty expedients and suggested:

"There is, for instance, a case for a more lenient means test to be applied than the National Assistance Board's when exemption from the charges is asked for, which should be coupled with higher charges to those who can afford them . . . There is a case . . . for a boarding charge for hospital in-patients . . . There is a stronger case than ever for relating national insurance contributions to earnings, so that the health service portion can be increased without falling too heavily on the lowest incomes."

The present boom and fairly full employment may make this sound reasonable to the comfortably off, but one knows too well what this kind of concern for letting off "the really needy" amounts to: always to the exclusion of more people than it relieves. And whatever form such means test-based schemes may take, they lead back, inevitably, to the mother who hesitates to call the doctor, and to a two-standard service.

### 3. Lady Albemarle's Modest Proposals

Peter Massie

WHEN EXPERTS come together to discuss the aims and needs of a particular section of society, it must surely occur to them that the needs of that section must be seen in relation to those of society as a whole. Most Government Commissions fail to face up to this fundamental dilemma. It is not surprising then, that there is little discussion on this point. What indeed are the fundamental values of our society that will help us to legislate for the welfare of young people?

If we live in an "I'm all right, Jack" society, we have to face the social conflict that is the natural consequence of living in such a society. The Albemarle Report observes this conflict, but falls short of recognising it for what it is.

The Youth Service attempts to provide activities for the 'out of work' and 'out of school' leisure periods. Like other Government branches of the Welfare State, it began as a charitable organisation provided for and serviced by the better-off classes for the working-class children in urban areas. Even though it is now a recognised Government service within the Ministry of Education, it is still to a large extent administered on the same lines. The Local Government sub-committee which is representative of all the local youth organisations, advises on the expenditure of public money. This body, the Youth Committee, makes recommendations

to the Local Education committee as to which organisation is worthy of financial assistance. It should come as no surprise, therefore that the old established charities are the ones which get the lion's share. When the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs, the National Association of Boys' Clubs, the Church Lads' Brigade, and the Army Cadets' representatives have had their pickings from a very meagre fund, little is left for the newcomer who thinks in unorthodox ways about the Youth Service. The paternalistic approach which these established organisations have towards youth today, is one of the most detrimental legacies the Youth Service inherited.

These established organisations, then, comprise the main body of the existing Youth Service. They are no longer self-supporting, but receive direct aid grants from the Ministry of Education, as well as from Local Government. The policies these organisations pursue are never questioned. For the visiting Ministry of Education Inspector there are always activities such as basket-ball, woodwork, metal-work, model-making classes, etc., that can be measured statistically, so the Inspector has no difficulty in assessing their "worth." The need these organisations fulfil, is always spoken of as, 'mental', 'spiritual', and 'recreational'. The success they have in answering this triple need, has

never really been measured. Apparently the number of youths who demand this succour is small, for only one in three come into contact with a youth organisation during their adolescence. This ratio is, I think, one indication of the failure of the Youth Service to attract the more independent youth of today.

### A Compromise with Tradition

The Albemarle Report, would have done a very useful job had it produced some badly needed objective data on which one could base some aims of the Service, and measure some needs. I did not expect that it would make any radical recommendations and, unfortunately, it does not. In fact, the Report offers no new facts or figures about young people today, and the recommendations are often conservative and inadequate. Indeed, anyone who has kept up with the various relevant reports on young people in society, will find little excitement in this new addition. However, some insight is shown, in the Chapter on Aims and Principles, and the description of the *World of Young People* shows a remarkable freshness and sympathy. It is a pity that the spirit in which these chapters were written was not maintained throughout. These chapters attempt to describe the type of society in which young people find themselves today. It is full of the problems of status, the deadening routines of work, the dissatisfactions which young people feel as they mature in a changing society, and the problems associated with an emerging but separate culture of youth.

How does the Albemarle Committee propose to approach these problems? One of their most important recommendations is for the setting up of a Council. This Council is to consist of amateurs with special qualities and experience, and it is they who will be advising the Ministry of Education as to how to carry through the Albemarle recommendations. This is clearly a direct attempt to break away from—or contain—the influence of the old, established, national voluntary youth organisations. How successful can this breakaway be? Among those who are to serve on the Development Council, are an ex-commando, an educationalist, who is keen on walking and sailing, an Olympic gold medallist, the secretary of the Central Council for Physical Recreation, two senior school mistresses, the editor of *Crossbow*, a trade union official, a sociologist who likes boxing, a broadcaster, Richard Hoggart, and Lady Albemarle. This looks, on the face of it, a compromise body, and we are going to need a tougher solution than that, if the voluntary organisations are ever to be pulled into the twentieth century.

For it is the large voluntary organisations that have determined the standards until now, and their influences will remain for some time to come. An amateur body, such as the Development Council, could help enormously, even if its task was simply to assess the work of the voluntary associations from a new standpoint. But even for so modest a task, the Council should have included, for the first five years at least, representatives

of groups who are doing experimental work in the field. These groups have had a working success and are acquainted with the shortcomings of the traditional approach. But so far little or no attempt has been made to reshape the approach of the Youth Service to its problems in the light of experimental work being done in the field. Thus the experience gained in the 'teen-canteen' kind of experiment—an officially-sponsored coffee bar with a trained leader in charge—is there, waiting to be drawn on and used by the voluntary organisations, which are now themselves searching for ways in which they can make an informal approach to the more difficult youngsters: but no facilities exist for using such experiments as the basis of officially-sponsored projects by the Service on a wide scale.

A new sub-committee of the Local Education Committee is going to help the Development Council. This sub-committee is yet another attempt to seal off the influence of the traditional youth organisations, for it is not to be representative.

The formidable block of national voluntary youth organisations stands against these dubious agents of change. The two big giants in the youth club world are the National Association of Boys' Clubs, and the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs. Behind these, come the national Church youth organisations, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, etc. The patron of NABC is none other than Prince Philip, and although in some people's eyes he is not such a 'square', he recently had some weird things to say about the role of youth clubs. At a top NABC gathering, he said that youth clubs give young people what their more fortunate brothers receive at public schools. This idea is very acceptable to the middle-class controllers of the established youth organisations, and coming from a man, who, by establishment standards, is thought to be unconventional and independent, will carry much weight. That is an ominous sign.

### The Submerged Unclubbables

At a local level, most organisations will find it difficult to understand why they should re-organise for youths, who are from their point of view, truly 'unclubbable'. These organisations will have their influential backers, who will be prepared to support the old causes, and who argue that the good work the clubs are now doing will cease if the 'Teds' are pushed onto them. This may well seem a reasonable argument to an amateur observer. It is well established that, since the character of a youth club is determined by its members, one group in will inevitably keep another group out. The alternative for the Development Council, if the present Service proves to be inflexible, is to create or incorporate into the Service, the type of organisation that will do the job. In fact this is what will have to happen if the new aim of the Youth Service is to be achieved, for it hopes to encourage another million youths into using its facilities. Their number consists of the submerged 'unclubbables' who hitherto have been unimpressed by youth clubs.

To cater for the needs of this group, the Youth Service will have to create something that will be looked upon as the equivalent of 'going out'.

'Going out' is one of the most meaningful phrases. It describes an evening of real social intercourse. Its counterpart for the older generation would be an evening in the pub. Part of the folklore of these youths is to have one long 'going out' and no more work. The new organisations have got to match up to this 'going out' feeling. This task is too big even for the experimental work that is being done at the present. It would involve a major reorientation of emphasis in the youth service itself. The Development Council will have to rely on the help of the voluntary organisations. That is why the compromise structure discussed earlier is an evasion of the real issues involved: the vision of what is needed to meet this culture challenge was clear to the Albemarle Committee, but the built-in resistance to change and innovation in the 'established' voluntary wing of the Service remains. For there can be no question that the majority of people with experience in traditional youth work has resisted the influences of experiment. It will be difficult for these same people now to carry experiment through. I am assuming that the broad change should be to free the adolescent from the various quasi-educational alternatives that are offered, and to treat him like an adult: and to discover new ways in which this adult approach can be given organisational form in the Service—new kinds of clubs, a different role for the 'leader', more informal and democratic a structure, and so on.

### The Ministry Calls the Tune

We forget, however, that the Ministry of Education calls the tune. It controls money grants and can decrease its grants to organisations whenever it wants to. In the past, organisations had the alternative of seeking financial aid from various charitable trusts, if the Ministry of Education refused them help or decreased their grant. At a local level the position is much the same. As the Government has announced that it is prepared to increase its spending on the Youth Service, the charities have decided they no longer have an important role to play and will cease to subsidise youth organisations. This might increase the effective control of the Minister of Education; but it also means that the Government will have to spend more. The Government is going to spend £3 million on buildings for the Youth Service; but the extra money and buildings may well be quickly absorbed by the increase of the adolescent population, due to the bulge. The Albemarle Report observes what is obvious to anyone—that one of the chief needs of the Youth Service is financial assistance; it also suggests to youth clubs a way of supplementing their income, i.e. by raising their subscription fees. This seems a desperate and unwelcome shortcut—symptomatic of an approach to the Welfare Services which is growing increasingly popular with the Government. The Youth Service has been starved of funds

during the most critical period of its history and seriously impaired by the Block Grant. This is a social and community cost, which ought *not* to be passed back to the individual—particularly the young workers or teenagers. Surely one of the principal advantages which the Service has is that it provides entertainment and recreation *without* the accompanying exploitation which is characteristic of commercially-sponsored youth culture.

One of the most difficult problems that confronts the Youth Service at the moment is the lack of suitable youth leaders. An early report on the Service at the end of the War, recommended that there should be 5,000–6,000 trained personnel, with an intake of about 300 a year (The McNair Committee in 1944). There were 700 trained leaders in 1959. New plans are being made to recruit at least 600 more in the next five years, but this is a desperately modest aim. One unfortunate aspect of youth work, is the attraction it has for a rather queer group of people whose sole interest is 'the young.' Another is the middle-class background and education of many leaders, which ill equips them for a full-time job with working class adolescents—and a job which requires the utmost sympathy, tact, informality and understanding. No wonder then, that many of the youths who boycott clubs describe youth leaders either as 'stuck-up', 'bullies', or—as they themselves put it—'bent'. The job of leader calls for someone with broad interests, who is committed to the life of the community at large. If young, healthy and intelligent people are to be attracted to the profession, there will have to be an increase in salaries.

The proposal to make the position of youth leader inter-changeable with that of teacher is an excellent one, provided that one is a youth leader first. There are dangers in the school teachers' approach in a youth club. Bad teachers have to be tolerated by their pupils but bad youth leaders can be ignored. However, teachers who have to cope with the problems of teenagers in their last year at school could benefit tremendously by doing some youth work as well.

### The Popular Environment

Unfortunately, criticising the Albemarle Report is too easy. One can see all the way through, the technical hitches inherent in a service that is still largely voluntary. An amazing lapse is the failure of the established bodies to define their aims and practices more clearly in the light of our increasing knowledge about youth culture. This 'culture' involves clothes, dancing, music, sex and the cinema. The importance of these interests can be seen in the large amount of money adolescents are prepared to spend on them. The commercial world has been quick to appreciate the demand for records, dance halls, coffee bars, Italian cut suits, X Certificate films, etc. There is an increasing pressure to spend, and given the intensity of his feelings towards these interests, the teenager is easily exploited. In fact, this is the blind side of the average secondary modern adolescent. Schools

should help the adolescent to be discriminating, when these interests take hold of him, but they rarely do. Schools may plead guilty of ignoring these interests with reason (the reasons have less and less force!), but the Youth Service certainly cannot.

The popular environment is now at least as important as a formal education in shaping the attitudes and values of the teenager today. This is a rapidly changing environment, which can be all too easily exploited for commercial ends. The young adult deserves—both at school and in leisure—help in an appreciation of what is genuine and valuable in popular culture, and a developing sense of discrimination, which will assist him to discard what is trite, meretricious or unworthy. The Youth Service must rapidly take over, as part of its work, education for leisure in this broad sense, or gradually lose what positive influence it has. It goes without saying that this kind of ‘education’ needs training and skill to exactly the same degree as wood-work or dressmaking, and cannot be conducted in anything but a friendly and informal environment.

### Planning For The Turnover

One of the besetting problems of the Service is the high rate of turnover in Club membership. This has always been seen as a ‘problem’: it is time we began to see it as a ‘challenge’, and developed a Service flexible enough to cope with it. If, in addition to the main Club, there were specially designed small clubs, catering for the special interests of a young boy and girl for the few months in which he or she is likely to come into contact with the Service, then the proportion of young people touched at *some point* by the Service would immediately go up. These Clubs could be as diverse as the open workshop for motorcycle repairs—for youngsters who were not permanently attached to a Club—or the ‘teen canteen’ specially designed with the facilities of the commercial cafe for the ‘unclubbable’. It is only in these ways that the Service is going to break free of the hard core of club regulars, and begin to make contact with the two-in-three teenagers who, at present, are not being catered for. What is needed is a recognition that tastes and interests in adolescence change rapidly, that the ‘Club’ population is going to fluctuate whatever we do—and a radical re-adjustment of the scope and facilities offered to take account of these well-established facts.

How seriously will this kind of challenge be met after the Albemarle Report? This depends, in the first place, on the amount of money that is to be spent on the number of adolescents involved. There are four and a half million adolescents between the ages of 14 and 20 years. Perhaps one million will not use or need the Youth Service for one reason or another. This leaves three and a half million adolescents to cater for. The Youth Service has been spending £2,500,000. £75,000 has been given in the form of direct grants. The Report has suggested that this figure should be ‘considerably more’. The estimate for spending on the Universities

and Colleges in 1960–61 is £66,000,000. The number of full-time students for this period is expected to be 110,000. One can agree with the priorities, but not with the proportions of the above spending.

### Jazzing Up the Service

By way of summing up the Albemarle Report, one can say that on the whole it seems content with the present set up of the Youth Service, but it would like to see some things jazzed up a bit. It does feel, however, that in certain particular areas, the aims or organisations within the Service will have to be re-defined to meet the needs of those youths who have rejected youth clubs. These groups of youths must now be attracted into the service. To see that this is done effectively, a group of non-professional outsiders have been brought in to put the situation right—partly to keep the professionals at a distance, although their advice may be sought if necessary. In the meanwhile, new people have to be recruited and trained. The new attitudes, sketched at the beginning of the Report have to seep down to the roots of the various organisations. The change is going to depend as much as anything on the sense of responsibility of the Local Government. However, the Government has not gone so far as to envisage new legislation that will force it to spend the little extra it may get in its block grant, on the Youth Service. Until this at least is done (or better still, the Block Grant system—which encourages local councils to pare down Youth Service grants—abolished) it would be rash to expect great changes.

How has this responsibility for young people been discharged? Eighteen years after the issue of the 1939 Circular and 13 years after the passing of the 1944 Act, a Select Committee of the House of Commons held the first serious inquiry into the state of the Youth Service.

Its report is an illuminating and shocking document. Examined by the Committee, the Ministry of Education's spokesman frankly admitted that:—

“It has been definite policy for some time now not to advance the Youth Service”.

Further, Whitehall has given no guidance to the Local Authorities as to what the Youth Service should seek to provide or the standards at which it should aim. As the Minister's spokesman put it:—

“It has not been the policy to expand this Service up to any definite standard to which one is working of fairly general application before one can apply anything in the way of a fairly vigorous prod to a Local Authority and I admit straight away that there is no national standard in this matter.”

*The Younger Generation*—Report of the Labour Party Youth Commission.

# Dream Boy

Ray Gosling

In this article, a young signalman, who has organised the first of the Youth Venture clubs in Leicester, writes a manifesto for the scheme.

THE BOY stands up in his sexual and phallic dress, a rebel against a sexless world of fear, and from his own he has made gods. In his dress, his walk, in his whole way of life he makes a private drama for the world that failed him to take note of. "Look at me, look at me and those I, with my money, have defied." Recently I was walking through a market in a country town, and a man was shouting from behind a trinket stall: "Buy your lockets here, only half a dollar, Tommy Steele, Elvis Presley, the Sacred Heart, the Virgin Mary, Marty Wilde, Cliff Richards, buy your lockets here." In one was a picture in blue of the Virgin Mary, and in another a black and white head and shoulders photograph. It could have been the face of any of a score of boys who threaded those stalls, but it wasn't. It was Reginald Smith, the 20 year-old son of a London bus driver, better known as Marty Wilde, the rock'n'roller, the heart throb of the millions, the boy a generation has made a god, a Tin Pan Alley virgin. The boy stands in the age of the contraceptive as a potent hope. He stands in an age of frustration as a dream lover, a sub-American idol.

The subject is male, in his late teens and early twenties. He was born either in, or just before the last War. His



family and his background are working-class. His education was paid for by the State. He lives in a metropolis, a city, a town; in a terraced street, a tenement block; on a redevelopment area, or a new estate. He is talked about in the posh monthlies. He is mentioned in the family journals. He is headlined in the popular press, and he is analysed in the educated magazines. He has done something. He has moved it. He has made a hit record. He has stood on a street corner. He has robbed an old lady. He has more money in his pocket than his people have ever had. He has hit a policeman on the head. He has fought his friends with a flick knife. In an age of sexual muddle his common charm has attracted the society moll and the homosexual. He stands on a stage spotlight in blue, on a street corner in sodium orange, asking for real, for love in an artificial age. He is your son, the nation's hope, the child of the emancipated common man, the idol of a moneyed age, the hope in a world full of fear. His face comes out in the third dimension from the screen to appeal to the mother, the daughter, the youngest son; to epitomise this new glossy world of boom. He has become a new Dionysus, and the world sings a paean to his purity; a purity born of a fear created by his father's generation. He is constantly pleading for love, for help, and for understanding; and yet he is incapable of returning that love. His search is for the dream lover that does not exist, for the dreamland that cannot exist; and his frustration is in this knowledge that his dream will never come true.

At the end of the last War, the boy emerged into a world of hope, and a world of fear. There was hope for a better world, with the Labour Party, and the Trade Union. The hope and belief in a dream. He was promised free teeth. He was promised a Council house, and given a place on a waiting list. He was promised educational equality—and given the Secondary Modern. His own failed him. Instead he was given American Aid. American gods. His sister became a GI bride. Slowly, and without his noticing it, he began to earn more money. At the same time he was given a fear; fear of the Bomb, of science, of the social worker; of a war of total destruction, of the power of the machine, the probings of the psychologist, and even of population increase. The Empire his father knew was given away. The Party his father helped, gave no constructive and positive answer. The Church his father knew was speechless. An 11 year old Fulham boy on a charge of arson said: "The reason I did it is I am unhappy. I lay in bed and wondered why God has made me unhappy, so I decided to burn his Church."

This cult of the English idols has grown since the beginning of the 1950's. With the defeat of the Labour Party, and the start of the Tory boom, it has been increasing. The one exception was the Suez Crisis. There the world of before-the-war to some extent returned. The troops on the dockside at Southampton sang *Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye*. Anne Shelton and Dorothy Squires topped the British hit parade. The boys were eclipsed. The boom in Borstal entries dropped, and the world of the Empire returned. I can remember sitting in a signal box, listening on the phone to a portable radio a signalman had down the line—the news bulletins, and the voice of Sir Anthony Eden. I can remember the feeling that ran down the line as they “stood behind Eden”, the man who was to show them and the world that the Old Bulldog could bite as well as bark, that Britain was still represented by that grimy statue of Queen Victoria, Empress of India, on the town hall square: that they were still at the heart of “the greatest Empire of all time”. They would send a gunboat and show the wogs how the lion still roared. There was not one man who at that time spoke against Eden, yet one could feel in the comments made their knowledge that the Empire was dead; pre-war Britain would never return, Eden would fail. They all knew it, as the American USAF trucks roared back to their British base across the bridge. And after the crisis was over, and the old world returned, the Boys poured back into Borstal, climbed to the top of the Hit Parade, and the new aided-England boomed on: Eden had sold them down the river. The wogs had beaten them. The dream of the Empire's return was as much a dream as the Socialists' land of milk and honey. The men felt again, as a National Service man said to Hoggart (quoted in *The Uses of Literacy*) “Life is a permanent wank inside you”. The feeling of failure, the frustration returned.

The Boy does not usually understand what he has for sale, but he is very conscious that the world outside is wooing him. They want his purchasing power, his vote, his opinion, his photograph. He is afraid of what they want, and of their sudden interest. It bewilders him. His father had nothing to sell. Now they are willing to buy his son. They want to *buy* him, not take him by force. His private drama has become inflated, exaggerated. His violence, his excess bravado—if nothing else—will give him the front page headline. “Let them take this”. He keeps well away from them, and his hate of them increases. He is afraid of selling what he has no right to sell, of coming to an agreement with Them that isn't fair. He, and his gang make their own music, perform their own drama, and draw less and less on Them. His dress, his whole way of life becomes a rebellion against Them. His suspicions fall on the older generation; perhaps his own parents have betrayed him, did not tell him the truth, fed him a line, are holding something back. His idols must have done something, they must have sold their virginity, their birthright. The boy does not understand his new power.

All he knows is that they are wooing him. It is the feeding of the line that he is most afraid of. For centuries his people have slaved for them, but he is the boss now. The Labour Exchange wants his labour. He does not have to plead for a job. He has the money. He has the power. He is the one with something to sell. He reads it in the papers. He sees it on the television. He is constantly being told of the dreamland that now lies within his own reach, just around the block, just across the green . . .

## Just Around the Corner

The dreamland is always, like the win on the pools, just around the corner. The man with the big cigar from up West who discovers The Boy, and buys him up, never arrives. Like the Education plan, and the premium bond, it can happen, but it rarely does, and always there is the fear that you have to sell what you have no right to sell. To reach the dreamy scene, the girl, or the boy in the teenage stories who is helped to a stage success by a Boy God in the end, finds true love, and happiness in the arms of the kid across the street who was jilted in her or his desire to be top. You have no right to sell your birthright. To be top you must lose your heritage, the love on the street that will never let you down. To be a God you have to make a deal with them, and they are never honest. They never play fair. They never treat you right. The haze that surrounds the life of the Boy is a fog of fear, and not the mist about to rise on a dazzling dawn of success. He lives in Birmingham, not Hollywood—a dead Empire in a sunset world, yet still hopes that somehow, an Eden will pull off the trick, Super Mac will open up those golden gates, and here along the M1 the orange trees of California will begin to blossom. There must be a lucky card somewhere, a permutation no one has found, a new body movement more appealing than the last. The man might come from Vernons. The man might come from the theatrical agency. The cheque, and the contract might be in his hand. Others may call apart from the rent man. If only he had the contacts. If only . . . And so this boy with everyone and everything against him, plays out his own private drama to the foggy street, with his god on a chain round his neck, his girl clinging to his arm. Against all of them; in search of the heaven he sees on the glossy page, the screen, and the hoarding.

He may go up West, into London, into the nearest sub-American centre. He may go to sea. He may sell his body to Them. He may get married. It will all fail. Frustration, boredom, the ‘permanent wank’ remain. You've got to keep alive. The drama of living is still performed. The ritual and the public face are still portrayed. The ‘one day’ is still hoped for. A new gang will supercede his own. He has in time to make do with what his people have had to make do with for centuries. He goes out to work to keep the woman he married, to keep up the HP payments, the rent. The cheap cigarettes are still clipped. The children arrive



by accident, and are grudgingly fed. In the new Council house, on the new estate, the way of life is much the same. If you weren't a-crying, you'd be a-roaring. He may vote for the Tories, for the Super Mac world. He may still believe in some of the lines, half-heartedly doing the pools, improving himself at the Tec. But his own have let him down. 'Them' are still the Them. It's all a line they spin; it's your money and your body they're after. There's nothing in it besides that.

It is the boy who is being wooed, not the girl. The dream is a dream for boys. The fear is a masculine fear. For the girls and for those not of the working class, there is no place in this heaven. The saints must be boys, of the people from the Secondary Modern School. The gods do not descend from the Grammar school, from the Technical college, or the University, but from the fog. It is worthwhile listing the miraculous lives of these boy-saints who epitomise their generation, who are defied by their people, and worshipped by much of the world.

Tommy Steele, the Goldmine with a guitar was born Thomas Hicks in 1936 in Bermondsey, London, SE. He left school at 15 and joined the Merchant Navy. He met his Man, Larry Parnes at the '21's Coffee Bar' in Soho. He has starred in the *Tommy Steele Story*, the *Duke Wore Jeans*, and *Tommy the Toreador*. His TV shows have included *6.5 Special*, *Drumbeat*, the *Oh Boy Show*, *Boy Meets Girl*, *Saturday Spectacular*. He has been the subject of an *Observer* profile. He has more recently sponsored Youth Ventures Limited with Lord Pakenham.

Terry Dene was born Terence Williams in 1938 near the Elephant and Castle, London, SE. He left school at 15 and worked in a Fleet Street News Agency, a cycle store, a timber yard, as a plumber's mate, and a packer in an Oxford Street store. He met his man, Hyman Zaal, in the '21's Coffee Bar', and sang "The Golden Age" in the film *The Golden Disc* in which he starred. He appeared at the head of the bill in teenage TV, and stage package shows. He travelled on the railway without paying his fare in Lancashire. He walked down Wigmore Street, London, W.1, in his underpants and carpet slippers, in the early hours of the morning, and on both occasions he was arrested. He married a showgirl, Edna Savage, and was enlisted for National Service. In a blaze of publicity he joined the Army, and suffered a nervous breakdown within days. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, and in another blaze he was discharged from the Army. Quietly he was met by Larry Parnes, who returned him to his pedestal without his wife.

Marty Wilde was born Reginald Leonard Smith in 1939 in Greenwich, London, SE. He left school at 15 and worked as a tea boy in a City office and as a timber hunker, not in the City. He met his Man—or to be more precise, Mr. Parnes chased him—after he appeared at the Condor Club in Soho. He starred with Dame Sybil Thorndike and Harry Secombe in *Jetstorm*. He registered for National Service, and was rejected

on account of flat feet. Questions again were asked in the Commons. He has appeared on the usual TV shows, and has toured Britain. His hit records include *Endless Sleep*, *Misery's Child*, *Teenager in Love*, *Danny*, *Badboy*, *Wildcat*, and *Donna*. His long-player is called *Wild about Marty* but contains none of his own hit songs. On a glossy front, behind a microphone he stands, a half-smiling boy in a whiter-than-white shirt, and a red sleeveless, home-knitted cardigan, his shirt sleeves are three-quarters rolled, and he wears a plain gold band on the fourth finger of his left hand. He sings on the record: *All American Boy* and *Dream Lover*. Recently when the Luton Town Young Savers Campaign recently held a meeting at which he was to have been the chairman, and he failed to appear (fog held up his private plane). Neither the Mayor, nor Larry Parnes could control the meeting.

Billy Fury was born Ronald Wycherly in 1941 in Birkenhead. He worked on a Mersey tug boat, until at his own request he met Mr. Parnes at a Liverpool rock show. His records include: *Maybe Tomorrow*, *Angel Face*, and recently in Dublin the curtain was drawn across his act on account of his obscene gestures.

Adam Faith was born in 1940 and grew up in London. He worked putting ink into bottles for a printer and doodling on film and TV sets. He met his Man, not Mr. Parnes, at the '21's Coffee Bar'. He has recently stormed the hit parade with *What Do You Want*, *Made You*, *Did What you Told Me*. His films include *Beatgirl*, and he talks of himself as a beatnik actor.

Cliff Richard, the golden boy of discland, was born Harry Roger Webb, the son of a minor civil servant in Lucknow, India, in 1940. He grew up, after the British left India, in Cheshunt, Herts, where he went to the Secondary Modern school, and later worked at a nearby electronics factory. After a variety of incidents including being locked up in a bedroom by a theatrical agent, and after five days being given a promise, and a fiver for his trouble, he met his man, Mr. Ganjou, after appearing at the '21's Coffee Bar'. His first record was *Schoolboy Crush*, and *Move It*. His latest are *Living Doll*, *Travelling Light*, and *Fall in Love*. His films include *Serious Charge*, where the shot of him posed against a red brick council house wall aroused the largest sigh from a cinema audience that I have ever heard. He stars in *Expresso Bongo* and C. A. Lejeune said in her review headed 'Strumpets and Drums': "are we meant to laugh at him? It seems rude, somehow". In the Strand he was the victim of eggs and tomatoes, but in Glasgow mounted police were called to make a way for him from the theatre through the screaming fans.

## The Heart-Shaped Bar

Out of what was once a black and seething mob, there have emerged, one by one, individual personalities. Afraid, and failing to understand, they pose on the threshold of a new world built to cater for them as gods, and the world talks, and talks of them. At the

Royal Albert Hall they hold their Pop Proms; in the teenage magazines they have their "Pop Page", their glossy picture of the god, their pop academy; their Key to Showbiz. *The Times* prints a score of letters on the Teddy Boy. The Queen meets Tommy Steele. Princess Margaret does the cha cha. The Duke of Kent asks for rock'n'roll. The Queen Mother speaks to Cliff Richard. The Duke of Bedford buys a juke box. Lord Montague holds a jazz band ball. *The Sunday Times* produces a picture documentary on youth. Clancy Sigal investigates. Anne Jellicoe writes *The Sport of My Mad Mother*. *The Boy With a Meat Axe* goes on at Guildford Rep. From the press, from the television screen, the radio, the glossy magazine, the family monthly, there is this voice, this picture, this endless talk of the Boy. It is the Boy who is sizzling, sexy, poetic. Yet is society doing anything to help? This boy pleads for love, for understanding. He stands bewildered, and afraid in a world he did not create. What is he offered?

We have built him a heart-shaped bar at the Palais de Danse. He is given a vague hope that one day Super Mac and the football pool will solve everything. But what is being done to make life in Coatbridge or Coalville more bearable, more comprehensible, more positive? Is this Boy to be sold down the river on a Tin Pan Alley show boat, forever?

I stood the other day on a Palais dance floor during their talent competition, and listened to three of the Boys who sang, without any cant, with a feeling and an intimacy akin to the catholicity of the jazz band, the *Ballad of Bethnal Green*. The couples on the floor laughed and cheered at this song about themselves sung by their own kind. There was no dreamworld in the song, or in the way they sang it; but the prize went to a starry-eyed group singing an Anglo-American hit. They sang with their eyes fixed on the roof, as if supplicating to heaven, and played with the dedication of Salvation Army bandsmen, voiced in American accents, so full of tragic hope, so obviously failures. Isn't it time something more positive than a dream was offered this generation? Must American hits sung by British boys continue to put fat sums of money into the pockets of Them? Why do these boys have to turn to the *chi chi* USA in a booming Britain? Why is it that there is no alternative to this?

## Talking Another Language

In general the youth clubs, the Government, the Church of England, the Labour Party, and the trade unions are talking in a language that does not make contact with the new world that has arisen, the new conditions, and the new code of behaviour and living, of this younger generation. Yet the Boy does not wish to abandon his birthright. He is too afraid of the world outside to leave his own estate or street. He is not yet the all-American boy. He is still in England, with a history, and a tradition. The Labour Party talks of votes and not of the dignity of man, a dignity they fought for in the past. But this Boy needs dignity too;

today, tomorrow. The Church is very kind. The Government tells him that he has never had it so good. He has created his own world, and has found more inspiration for it from America than from his own country. But he is not satisfied with this answer. He does not enjoy being made into big business. He does not like being the stooge for other people's ambition. The world he lives in, this world the educated minority of his people fought to bring into being, is being sold to the Man, to the owners of the heart-shaped bar. He does not want an American dream culture, a romantic and slushy ballroom. He is proud that he sells so well, that he is big news, big business; but he would prefer to keep his world to his own. The pop singer is constantly pleading to sing British songs, but so little in Britain makes the necessary contact, and so much in America does. At least he now has his own gods, many of whom sing the songs they themselves have written, in an American idiom. He no longer relies entirely upon America. The success of the Boy is dependent on his identification with his own generation, and his own people. This partly explains the failure of such singers as the older Anthony Newley, or the posh John Fraser to become gods; and the success of the Americans Frankie Avalon and Elvis Presley. The boy must be of the working class, and of this teenage world; and these requirements are more physical, in looks and voice than in any mental quality of personality, or thought.

And what of the educated minority? And what are the intellectuals doing? And what do they talk about in Cambridge and Chelsea? And what are they reading in the red brick? There is John Braine, the library assistant: John Osborne, the angry young man; Colin Wilson from the secondary modern; Brendan Behan, the Borstal boy; Arnold Wesker the kitchen hand; Shelagh Delany, the mill girl—all without a university education. In this era of opportunity when all can go to the University, the halls and courts of learning are still filled by Them and their converts. It is the Boy without Government aid who has become the most sought after, the most talked about and the most talkative, the most voluble person of the last decade.

A whole new world has arisen. A world that has been in darkness for so long looks for a voice that will make the light comprehensible, and it still turns out so often to be the voice of Elvis Presley or Tennessee Williams. For the popular or intellectual voice of the future it has to turn away from England, and it so desperately wants an English answer to an English situation. It wants Bevan to speak out loud on the today and the tomorrow. It wants Marty Wilde to sing with a cockney accent. It wants Osborne to proclaim some message for the future. It does not want to turn to the Common Market, the United States, the Commonwealth. It is still loyal to the Left, to England; but its Party, its country seem impotent. They fail to understand, to grasp the decade's tone, to provide the hope and the message. The new generation throngs to *Violent Play-*

*ground, Room at the Top, Expresso Bongo, to Roots, to Look Back in Anger*, only to find them that little bit out of contact, so nearly there and yet not finding that tone for the age. And this is the fault of the educated minority, that has in the past always arisen from, or on behalf of the people; and in this bright present seems unable to make any contact. So many who should be in that minority have surrendered with the help of the University and the Welfare State to a world of science, mental conditioning and the objective; and so abandoned their contact with the people. So many have become progressively academic, technical and inhuman. The methods of social advancement have become so easy that the fight for an age of equal opportunity has been almost forgotten, and in the University, the trade union and the Labour Party, the true voice of the people has grown weaker and weaker. In this new world of youth, of working class prosperity, of boom, in this television advertising age, this all-essential voice has been lost, as a major power.

If the working class world of Bevan, of the 1930's and 40's is going, and the exploitation of the people is becoming more mental than physical, it is time that something constructive was offered to the generation who find in The Boy its epitome. A larger and a greater hope must be given than the football pool or the man from Denmark Street.

Above all the Labour Party must cease to cheapen itself in an appeal for votes, and in talk of a better world through more educational change, and more state ownership. It must return to the humanitarian tradition, to the ideal of the dignity of man, to the human values it has stood for in the past. It is the real world of today that asks for help, and it needs it as desperately as the world of yesterday did. There is no answer in planning another social revolution, in giving another dream to a people still disillusioned, and dazzled with the last. The social revolution is taking place. A new world has been born. The country is a better place. The working class are better off than ever before. But the exploitation continues, the cheapening of human life is being accelerated. The mental and moral degradation is as intense, as terrifying as the physical of the past. The new generation will have its gods, but should they be those who are willing to go to bed with the theatrical agent? Are there no other qualities that should be considered apart from the sexual? Must that be the sole qualification for deification; and having been made a god, must his existence be merely a method of extorting as much money from as many people in as short a period of time as possible? Yet that is one industry that no one has suggested should be nationalised.

Here is a figure worthy of the status of hero—a new youth in a new world. His own country can offer him little—a dream, exploitation, the culture of the older generation. His world awaits a new culture, a new art in the age of the common man. If it does not soon emerge one may lose the qualities centuries of living and of experience and hardship have created.

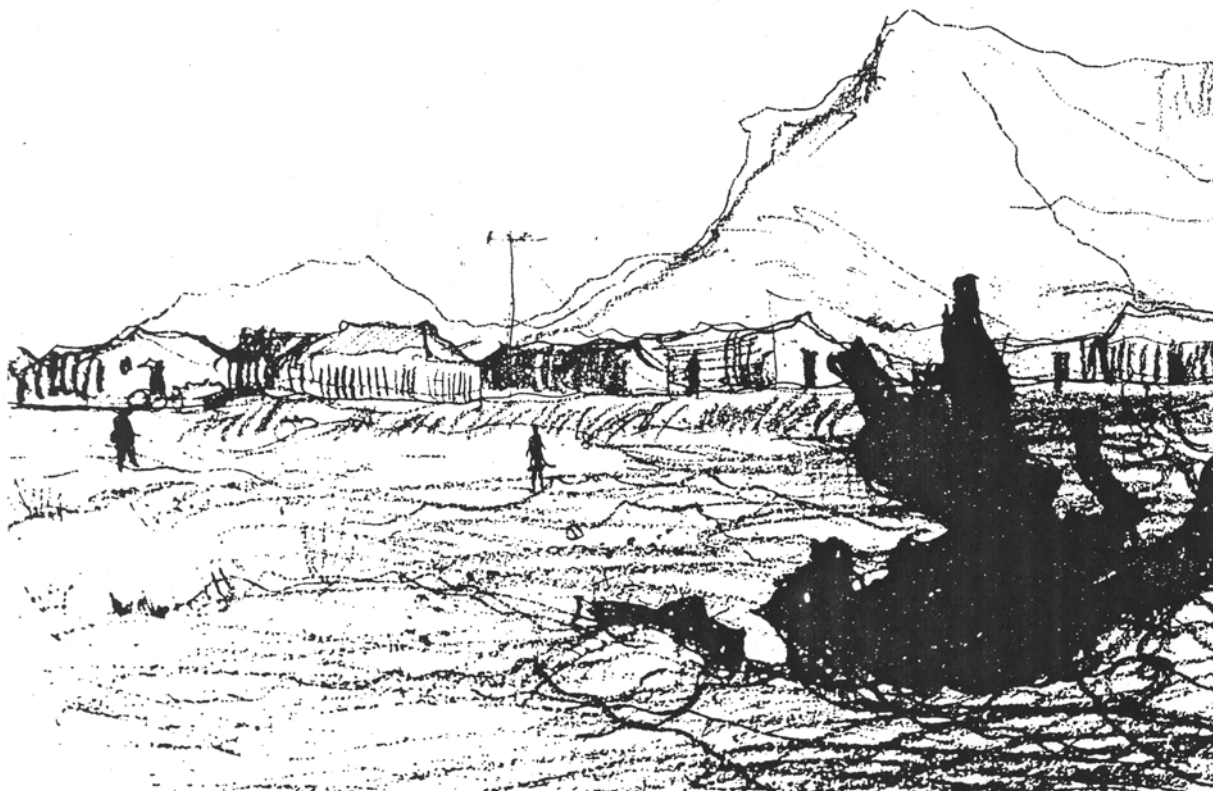
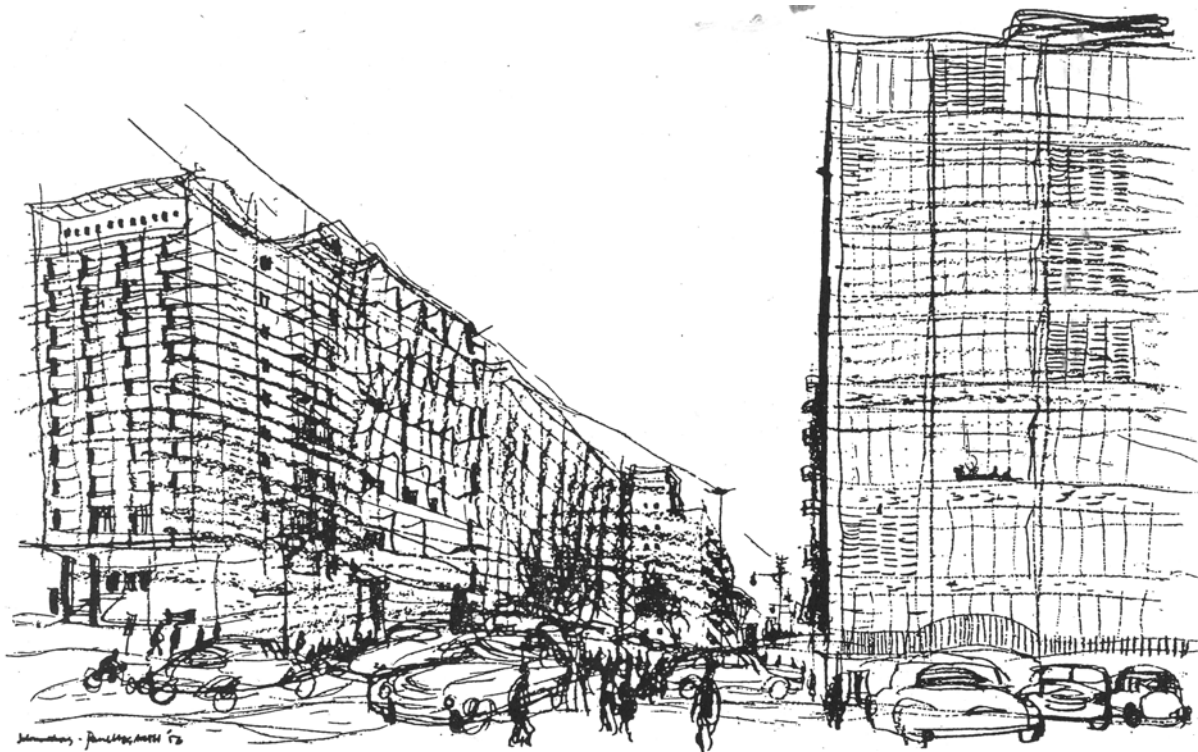
A South African portfolio by Paul Hogarth

# Background to Sharpeville

Three blocks, from Paul Hogarth's *People Like Us*, were kindly loaned by Dennis Dobson, Ltd.



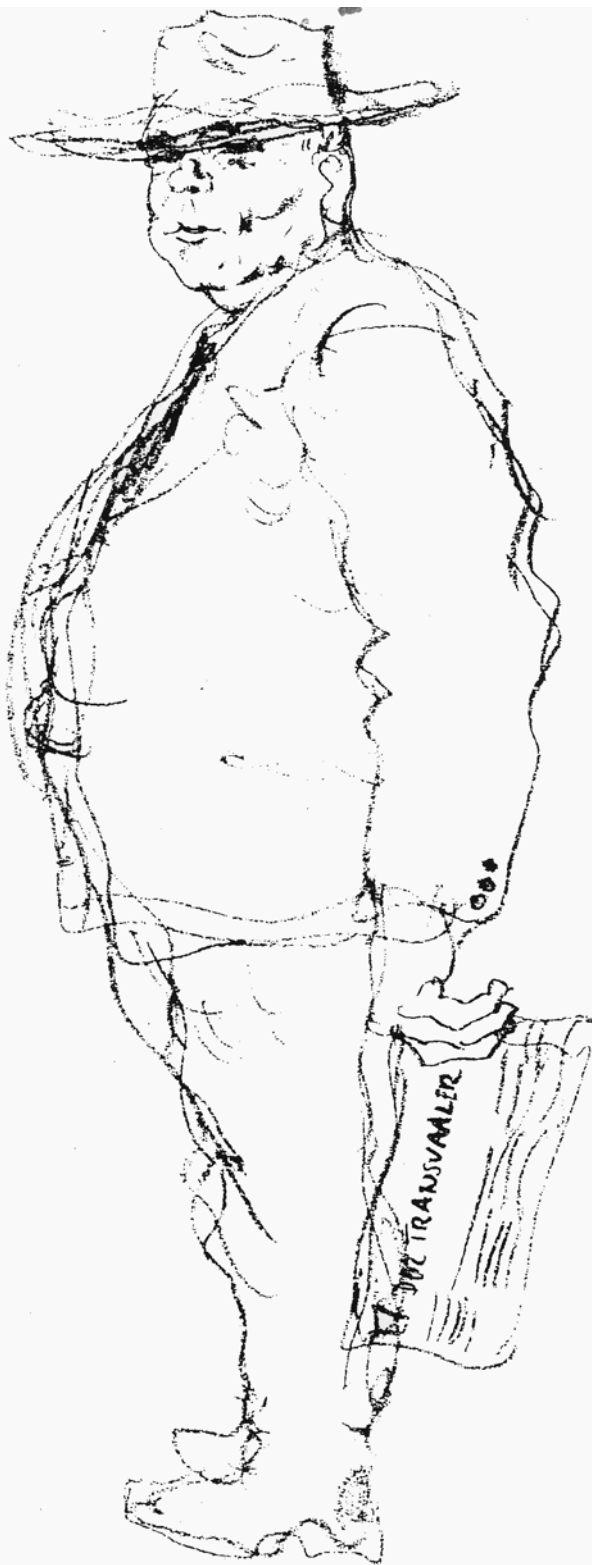
Down on the farm



(left) White Johannesburg

(right) Pretoria Afrikaaner

(below) On the other side of Table Mountain.





The Homeless Woman

# Whose Africa Year?

John Rex

ON SUNDAY, March 27, the London police stood shoulder-to-shoulder around South Africa House to guard it against possible attack by the demonstrators in Trafalgar Square. From South Africa came news that the South African police had announced that they would not enforce the pass laws for the time being "to ease tension", and that the President General of the African National Congress had burnt his pass in the presence of photographers. Meanwhile the report from Central Africa was that the Tory Colonial Secretary was arranging for the release of Dr. Banda and arguing for a "semi-detached" Federation.

It is hard to underestimate the significance of such a course of events. We have, it is true, become so used in the last ten years to being told that *next* year would be "crisis year" in Africa, that we find it hard to believe that even the massacre at Sharpville could be of more fundamental significance. But South African policemen do not simply give up applying the pass laws for Lent. They are faced, as the white settlers in Central Africa and Kenya are faced, with the plain fact that settler rule is cracking at its foundations, and no-one can predict exactly how the balance of power will shift in the next few months. What Socialists in Britain have to do therefore is to try to understand the revolutionary situation which is developing and the related conflict of policies which will grow sharper every week.

The main lines of the conflict were first clearly laid down in 1948 when Dr. Malan's Government was elected to power to implement a programme of *apartheid* in South Africa. But we should not be misled about this. Taken literally, *apartheid* simply means segregation, and segregation of the races was an accomplished fact not merely in South Africa, but in Central and East Africa also, long before 1948. The real issue was what the White populations were going to do in face of the fact that the right of the settlers to rule the indigenous African populations, was now challenged externally by the move towards independence in Ghana, by the Afro-Asian group at the United Nations, and internally by the organisations of the African peoples themselves.

The South African Nationalists answered this question quite openly by saying that they did not accept that Africans should ever have political power and that they were prepared to use all necessary means to maintain white domination or "baasskap". The British Government vacillated. Having been committed as long ago as 1923 to the doctrines of temporary trusteeship, followed by eventual black paramountcy, it could not accept the Malan and Strijdom doctrines. But under Lyttleton and Lennox-Boyd the Colonial Office came to accept *de facto* white rule, disguised under such slogans as "partnership" and "multi-racialism". Now,

at last, Mr. MacLeod is trying to find his way out of the mess inherited from his predecessors by a return to former British positions. In so doing he has run into open conflict, not only with Verwoerd, but also with Welensky in Rhodesia and Briggs in Kenya.

The most important changes brought about by the three successive Nationalist Governments in South Africa have been concerned, not with the segregation of Africans, but with gerrymandering measures or laws to put an end to the civil liberties of those who were prepared to work for a democratic future.

Under the heading of gerrymandering measures could be included the Act giving representation in the South African Parliament to the Europeans of South West Africa, and the Cape Coloured Voters Bill. The first ensured the return of six extra Nationalist MPs from constituencies where a vote was worth three times as much as in Johannesburg; the second, the certainty of Nationalist gains from the United Party in at least half a dozen seats in the Cape Province. In this way the Nationalists were able to obtain a two-thirds majority for any legislation they chose so that in effect the entrenchment of rights in the Constitution ceased to have meaning. And it was virtually certain that no future election could lead to a Nationalist defeat.

But Malan and Strijdom did not confine themselves merely to rendering Parliamentary opposition ineffective. They always knew that the real opposition lay outside Parliament, and they set about devising administrative and legal measures to limit the civil liberties of those who looked forward to some eventual pattern of democracy. Such is the nature of Nationalist policies that one Minister named its main opponents as "Liberals, Anglicans and Communists".

In the first few years the main weapon of the Government was simple administrative intimidation. Those who opposed white domination found that they couldn't easily get passports and some hundreds of White South Africans became aware for the first time that they had police dossiers. But when this did not thin the ranks of the critics sufficiently, direct legislation had to be introduced.

It was easy enough during the height of the Cold War in Europe to invoke the threat of Communism as an excuse. No-one overseas was likely to make much fuss about this, any more than they were over the witch-hunting that surrounded the Petrov affair in Australia. But the South African legislation was aimed, not simply at banning the Communist Party, but at enabling the Minister of the Interior to impose punishments and restrictions on specific persons who he "deemed" to be "furthering the objects of Communism". No-one who listened to Dr. Donges defending the Bill in the House would have been surprised if someone

sharing the political views of, say, Harold MacMillan had been "deemed" in this way.

The Suppression of Communism Law was used against a wide variety of European critics of *baasskap* and against nearly every African leader of any significance. Those named could, at the Minister's discretion, be confined to a particular area, forbidden to attend meetings or ordered to resign from their jobs. Thus it wasn't thought necessary to ban the African Congress and many other organisations, because the Government had the means available for rendering their leadership completely ineffective.

Nonetheless, resistance was not killed by this Act alone. Thousands joined in the Passive Resistance Campaign called by the African National Congress. So the Government introduced two new Acts. The first was the Criminal Law Amendment Act which made it a crime to urge resistance to the government by unconstitutional means, and imposed far more severe punishments, including flogging, for anyone found guilty of such an offence. The second was the Public Safety Act, which empowered the Government to declare a State of Emergency when it chose. What such a State of Emergency can mean has recently been illustrated by the unprecedented police assaults on the populations of Langa and Nyanga.

Meanwhile legislation, with even more drastic implications, was being prepared in the educational sphere. The Bantu Education Act transferred control of native education from the Christian missions to the Native Affairs Department, and the new syllabuses were designed, according to the Secretary for Native Affairs, to prevent Africans from aspiring to positions in life to which they could not hope to attain. And at the top of the educational ladder the Government has embarked on a programme of transferring African students from the two "open" universities to segregated colleges, where instruction will be in the vernacular and where lecturers will hold their appointments at the will of the Minister. Thus the new ideal university lecturer will be the biology teacher with a loyalty certificate from the Government teaching the Biblical theory of creation in Zulu.

Further laws to close the loopholes of *apartheid* have also been passed. Hitherto women have managed to hold their families together by supplementary wage-earning and by illicitly brewing beer for family consumption or sale. But the Government has now introduced a law extending passes to women, and thousands of women are likely to find themselves evicted from the towns and separated from their husbands and children. Moreover a great number have been arrested as police investigations on an increasing scale have exposed the illicit beer brewing apparatus in their backyards. It was against this background that violent demonstrations occurred late in 1959 and early in 1960 in Durban's Cato Manor location. The women picketed the beer halls, which are run as a municipal monopoly, and when scuffles with the police occurred, their fury at the

impossibility of their domestic situations boiled over into violence.

The role of the main African organisation, the African National Congress, during the past ten years has been a moderating one. Committed by its leaders to policies of non-violent resistance, it has organised defiance campaigns, protest strikes and boycotts. Here and there, as in the Bus Boycott, it has won limited successes. It also co-operated with Coloured, Indian and European organisations in calling the Freedom Congress at Kliptown in 1956. But its passive resistance campaign was broken by the threat of flogging and long prison terms, its calls for strikes were not very effective, and could not have been expected to be among a people, of whom 95 per cent live below subsistence level. Finally, all those who contributed to drawing up the Freedom Charter were put on trial for treason. Little wonder then that Congress leaders warned that their leadership might soon be rejected if concessions were not granted. As Ronald Segal wrote in a recent issue of *Africa South*, "While men may dispute openly, they may yet resolve in peace. With all argument forbidden, the future rides on the bullet and the knife."

In these circumstances something like Sharpeville was inevitable. But far from solving anything, Sharpeville has accomplished what the Congress could not. Today the pass laws cannot be administered because the Government has lost the last shreds of its moral authority. In future, if *baasskap* is to continue, it must be based on naked force.

## Turning Point at Accra

In other parts of Africa to the North, the issues have not yet become so clearcut. True, Welensky's claim after the arrests of March, 1959, that "partnership" could now work, seemed to suggest that a very similar pattern of events to that in South Africa would follow. But Central and East Africa were far more subject to the influence of the British Government and to that of outside African opinion and the self-confidence with which the settlers approached 1959 rapidly abated after their first encounters with Mr. MacLeod.

We shall not know for many years what factors have gone to bring about the change in Conservative policy which seems to be indicated by Mr. MacLeod's willingness to negotiate with Tom Mboya at the Kenya talks, or Mr. MacMillan's modest criticisms of the Nationalists in Capetown. Moreover, with emigre peers flying from Kenya to rally round Lord Salisbury in the Lords, one cannot be sure that the new line of policy will be maintained. But there are reasons why an intelligent Tory should seek to break with Welensky, and it would be foolish to pretend that, so long as the Labour Party confines itself to generalised assertions that Africans are entitled to democratic rights, it is the only Party capable of standing up to the settlers.

When the first all Africa People's Congress met at Accra in December, 1958, rapid political changes were already under weigh in the Congo and Tanganyika,

Since that conference the Congo has been promised independence, an African majority has been conceded in Tanganyika, and the Devlin report has exposed the true nature of Federal control in Nyasaland to the British public. No intelligent capitalist with investments in East and Central Africa can now believe that his investments are safe under settler government. Even if it were imagined that settler rule could be effectively maintained internally, it is hard to believe that Northern Rhodesia could continue in its accustomed ways with an independent African government in charge across the border in the Katanga copper belt. It is his understanding of this political background which has caused Mr. MacLeod to set many of Lennox Boyd's policies in reverse—to the anger both of some of his own back bench supporters and of settlers everywhere.

### **Africa's Africa Year**

The role of the Labour Party in relation to Africa in the next six months must be to back Mr. MacLeod as strongly as possible in everything which he does which will help Africans to break down settler control and to win for themselves civil and political rights. There will be plenty of Tory backwoodsmen fighting to hold MacLeod back and only consistent pressure on points of principle by the Opposition will enable him to stand up to the Federal Government and his own colonial servants. In particular, it needs to state clearly—as it has not yet done—that, it accepts the necessity of a break between Southern Rhodesia, where the colonial office has no effective power, and the two Northern territories, where it does.

This will be a hard enough task for Labour; but if it is to have any significance as a Socialist Party it should be looking forward to the next stage when the colonial territories are free and their leaders face the problems of social and economic development. A mere formula about 1 per cent will not do. Already Tanganyika and Kenya are facing these problems and there is some danger that uncontrolled capitalist investment there will lay the basis for indirect colonialism in the future. What the Labour Party could do is to enter into discussions with African leaders as to the sorts of institution through which investment could be channeled in the future. Clearly this is something which Mr. MacLeod's Party cannot do, and it is one of the main issues which will be facing the African leaders who meet in Accra early in April.

This is Africa Year. It is the year in which African revolt against an untenable and disgusting political system began to achieve its first successes. The demonstrations held in Boycott Month have created an immense basis of popular support for those who are prepared to throw in their lot with the Africans. If the Labour Party makes this cause its own, it will do far more than merely provide a reason for reluctant young radical voters to vote Labour in the next election. It will have played a key role in bringing about one of the most significant revolutions of our time.

# *Weekend In Dinlock: A Discussion*

A taped discussion of Clancy Sigal's *Weekend in Dinlock*, between miners and their wives, organised by John Rex

**John Rex:** I think you've all read Clancy Sigal's book. He is, as you know, an American Socialist, and one who is profoundly concerned about the future of the British Labour Movement. He felt that it is particularly important to look at the life and values of a mining community. Why is the life of a mining community so particularly important to the future of British socialism?

**Harry Freeman:** I think it's important because it's unique. Unlike other industries, nationalisation in the mines is really close to the people that partake in it. In the mining areas of Yorkshire you find that the whole village has developed in and around the colliery.

**John Rex:** Do you think that the relations with the officials at the colliery are the sort of social relations that you would expect to find in a socialist society?

**Mrs. McVeagh:** Far from it. If a man takes his certificate and becomes an official, he's more or less ostracised by the men, or at least thought to have changed sides.

**John Rex:** Do these divisions still remain?

**Harry Freeman:** I think nationalisation caused the rift to go even deeper. Since nationalisation, the under-officials have gone into the security class, whereas before they were more in line with the day to day face-worker on weekly pay. Now the only person who does not get superannuation or whole pay when he's sick is the worker.

**John Rex:** Do the miners today feel that it is their industry?

**Jim Dolan:** No, no, I don't think so. In the days of private enterprise there was the coal owners' Mutual Indemnity Company which looked after the compensation side of it. Now, it's simply changed its name. Otherwise there's the same staff, the same everything. I think that, that's the experience throughout the collieries. The men feel that the bosses are still the same, although there has been this change.

**John Rex:** Will this all be altered over a period when the present bosses and the present staff die off and they're replaced by new ones?

**Harry Freeman:** I can't think there can be any change while there is a class of worker who still has insecurity. The face-worker may be all right so long as he has a weekly wage. But there is insecurity the moment he's not working. Miners may earn big wages, but it's only for so many years. They're liable to drop into a very low income group in a week or so through accident or illness.

**Mrs. Goodwin:** This social insecurity does set them apart from other workers. They're people whose

whole life is spent worrying whether they will be involved in an accident and so lose their capacity to earn, or whether they'll be killed and leave their children fatherless.

**John Rex:** How far did you feel that this book did faithfully reflect the life of a mining community?

**Harry Freeman:** I think it's far from the truth. The title *Weekend in Dinlock* is a good title. But it's about all you could find out in a weekend. I think that this book does deal with only a small section of the miners' life. And perhaps the main thing I felt about it was that it portrayed a miner as aggressive, with a life full of fisticuffs and brawling. I think this is contrary to the truth.

**Harry Freeman:** That is certainly not typical.

**Jim Dolan:** Yes, but Sigal is not glorifying that in the book. He's just trying to suggest that that kind of aggressive character is the product of a social struggle.

**Mrs. Goodwin:** I think a miner's character is formed by insecurity: for example the loud-mouth self-assertive braggart. Sigal is trying to say that this kind of person is formed by that kind of life. And I think it's true. As regards the women, apart from moral standards, I think he's given us a faceless, characterless picture, and that miners' wives are not like that. They're tough and hard and they've so much character.

**Mrs. Freeman:** I would defend Clancy Sigal to a certain extent. I don't think he was actually looking for that sort of thing. But in any community the loud-mouthed person comes to the top first. You have to be there a long time to discover the rest of the community, the less assertive people. Louise, for instance, is a London woman, not from the mining community. Her standards are certainly not mine, and I'm a miner's wife. But as I said, he would meet her; that type would come to the top sooner than a more average miner's wife in general. Also miners are leg-pullers; they'll tell him all sorts of things which are not true.

**John Rex:** Referring to Louise, he says nobody knows what the women think. There are certain things that are said here about what men think about women. What comments do you have on this?

**Jim Donlon:** I won't forgive him for making that sort of statement on so little evidence. He must have realised that this book would get into thousands of homes where they don't know the mining community at all and that there is this danger of people taking this as an example. Louise made it quite clear

that she's a Londoner. Although she married a miner, she hasn't got a mining background. For a woman in a mining village to just go up to a stranger and say "Hello, Yank" is just too absurd to contemplate. It just wouldn't happen unless she was immoral.

**Harry Freeman:** I take exception to this part because I wonder if, before writing *Weekend in Dinlock*, Clancy Sigal had just put down *Germinal* by Emile Zola. There are shades of Zola in Sigal's book: the stress on the sexual side and the brutality of the mining community. I don't think he's fair to miners' wives at all. The relationship seems to me vastly different to the one that Sigal portrays. The old type of regular club man, who played billiards three or four nights a week, lived at the club in his spare time, is dying out. They're only a small minority now. In my own locality, out of several thousand miners, only a handful would be in a working man's club tonight.

**Mrs. Dobinson:** I want to disagree on that point I come from South Kirby and there you get quite the reverse. I should say you get a good half of the men who still live a club life.

**Harry Freeman:** I think that the relationship between a miner and his wife is vastly different. It's more a partnership now, as is the case in most societies. If a married couple have any young children they share evenings out. I could quote cases *ad lib* of people that I know of, who take it in turns if there are only three or four nights out available. When they are free to go out on their own (there are either no children, or the children are grown up) then they go out together.

### Keeping the Men Down the Pit

**John Rex:** What do you think of Davie's remark that a woman's job is to keep the miner going down the pits?

**Mrs. Dobinson:** I think this is true to a certain extent, but mostly among the older miners. I think that *Weekend in Dinlock* tries to make out that the woman is very subordinate, but in reality she's the pivot of the whole community. She bolsters him, he hands over his money to her, she runs the home without any interference from him. She herself brings up the children. She also bolsters up his self-esteem and makes it possible for him to go on thinking of himself as a fine fellow.

**Mrs. Freeman:** The man feels incapable of running the home. He'd rather do anything than handle the weekly accounts and so forth. The wife is the pivot. She's the manager.

**Mrs. McVeagh:** I think that's true. But it doesn't contradict what Clancy Sigal says, or at least what Davie says. The miner shelves this responsibility for the home, he pushes it on to his wife. Even the old miner thinks this is a woman's job—to run the home, and provide for him. He must not have worries when he comes home. And he doesn't always turn all the money over to her either. There are many miners, even

today who pay what they call "wages", to the wife. The rest of the money is their own for spending-money. Of course, they may go and buy a car with it or put down the money on the television.

**Harry Freeman:** There isn't much truth in what he wrote about the miners' wives crouching with cat's smiles on the mantelpiece while below them on the floor the toms rip each other to death. Although on the face of things they might be poles apart, I do think there's that inherent devotion between a miner and his wife. Even in this instance, where Davie did speak like that about Loretta in the first place, he speaks in affectionate terms later on in the book, when they become more reconciled.

**John Rex:** You said just now, though they may be poles apart there is that devotion. Is there a difference between what you mean by "devotion" and what Louise wants to symbolise when she talks about 'kissing'?

**Jim Donlon:** Miners are a very undemonstrative race, and whatever feelings they have are pretty well hidden. A miner is not the love-making type; he's too exhausted after a hard day's work. I know that his love technique must vary from those of any other industry.

**John Rex:** Isn't this what Louise is really getting at?

**Mrs. Freeman:** This is true for marriage in general, not just in the mining industry. If you've been married a few years, perhaps the romance tends to lessen a little, and maybe a wife sometimes thinks she'd like to go out and find some romance. But does she do it? I'd say no, in the case of a miner's wife, emphatically no. I think Louise may be true to life; I'm not saying she's not. But he shouldn't generalise from her. He should show what is more typical as well. After all, if he's too tired to kiss his wife at home, he's not likely to go three doors away to kiss somebody else's? I was a miner's wife for 27 years. I had two brothers who were miners, my father was a miner and I am born and bred right through in a mining community. I think that all these things that Clancy Sigal says were absolutely true 20 years ago, except the part about the degree of immorality among miners' wives. The morality of the miners' wives in those days was more loose than today because of the financial adversity.

**Mrs. Goodwin:** I can remember during the strikes when the total support for the men who were rapidly losing confidence was their womenfolk. They kept their morale up and said: "Lad, tha'll be all right when t'pit starts".

**John Rex:** The other very important theme in this book concerns the role of trade unionism in the mining community and this centres very largely around the figure of Bolton. I have heard people say that, while they don't like Clancy Sigal's book as a whole, the character of Bolton is rather well drawn. Mr. Donlon what do you think of Bolton?

**Jim Donlon:** Well, this description of Bolton seems to me, to go back about 20 years. I think it was true to say then that we did have quite a few people in the mining communities who were of Communist leanings and that these people did tend to rise to the top in village life and have quite a voice in its administration.

**Mrs. Dobinson:** I think Bolton is like a lot of trade union leaders—he likes himself; and the fact that he's always showing in a boasting way the things he's done I think proves this. The fact that he wants to be on Christian name terms with the opposite side of the fence seems to prove that he's really just a climber and after his own interest.

### Miners' Leaders

**Harry Freeman:** I have three points to make. First on this sort of two-faced attitude and secondly on the position of Bolton as a personality in the locality, and thirdly, about the supposedly Communist or extreme left-wing views of the man. First of all about his politics. Now my opinion is that the Communist type of person, the left wing, the radical man, will be elected because the men think they've got a fighter. Most miners' leaders in Yorkshire are left wing people. At least they start out as left wing. But I think that the position of responsibility tempers them somewhat, although they may still retain a sizeable proportion of their left wing attitudes. Then on this two-faced attitude of his; how does this come about? Well, mainly because of the system of conciliation and consultation. It is in consultation, that the Union man finds himself on speaking terms, on Christian name terms, with the manager. It's Tom, Jack, Bill, Jim and Harry in consultation. The same person, then, is expected to go round the other side of the table and become a manager when they're dealing with any conflicts or discussions on price lists or any kind of strike. Why does he become a personality? Well, I would say that a miners' leader, or a local official, does gain status and grows with the job, particularly if he's in the 35 to 40 age group. He takes part in trade unionism, first of all because he's a bright young man. Then by the very post of an officer he becomes almost indispensable. This job as a local trade union official carries with it other jobs, responsibilities, other aspects of social welfare, in all these branches of local community life. This is when he begins to claim: "I did this, I did that".

**Jim Donlon:** If the local union man does appear to be a figure of importance, there is some justification for it. He's got to be a diplomat, a lawyer, an accountant, all rolled into one, in a working-class community; and he's got tremendous responsibility. He makes these wages agreements with the management and he's got to uphold them, in the face of the militants, and the rebels: and he's got to have some kind of character and some personality to do it. My own father is treasurer of a branch of the union, but I wouldn't say that he was

a figure of importance; not in the same way as the branch secretary. The branch secretary knows them all by name, because he's coming in contact with them all the time. He knows the management, because he meets them at the meetings, in negotiations and so on ... The branch secretaries do all the compensation activities of the union. The men have got to consult him to send their cases to Barnsley. But taking the fact that Bolton was a Communist. Remember that they have a reputation for sticking to the people they represent. There is a distinction here. I've no sympathy for Communism at all, but they are often fighters for the people they represent. There are some trade union leaders who accept knighthoods. What do the working men think, when one of them gets a knighthood? They think that he's left them. But the Communists make good trade unionists because they always stick to their cause. You don't find them accepting knighthoods.

**Mrs. Dobinson:** I would say that Bolton is a Communist. Many trade union leaders that I know personally who have set out in the political field were members of the Communist Party. Because of their militant attitude during the industrial strife and the militant leadership that they've given, they become rather favourable with the working masses. They have an extensive political knowledge which also impresses the workers, which other political members do not possess, to the same degree.

**John Rex:** Bolton is important because negotiations over wages and price lists are still as important as ever they were in the mining community.

### International Solidarity v. Foreign Labour

**Jim Donlon:** One thing I admired about Clancy Sigal's book was that, having gone down to this mining community and being down the pit himself, he supported the men's reluctance to have the Hungarian workers. I felt pleased about that, because such men as Bolton have taken a stand against public opinion. We had to stand a tremendous amount of criticism on this subject from the press, and yet a man like Clancy Sigal has gone down for himself and realised the justification that the men had.

**John Rex:** What about the internal solidarity of the trade union sections, even among the miners. Do you regard it as a good thing that the Hungarian miners should be kept out?

**Harry Freeman:** You can still have international brotherhood, but in a specialised job like mining, where language means so much, if a man knows that by accepting foreign labour he's going to risk his very own life, well I'm afraid international brotherhood doesn't stand for very much. You and I would adopt the same attitude I'm sure.

**Jim Donlon:** Isn't it really because self-preservation is such a strong instinct that no matter what humanitarian feelings you may have about people

from foreign countries going into mining, they wouldn't carry very far under the circumstances in the pit. I don't think they could be expected to.

**Harry Freeman:** I don't think the miners have anti-socialist feelings towards miners of any other countries, but I think that it just isn't safe to take foreign people down the pit. You see, the understanding is so close and so intimate between workmates; it's built up over years, over generations. I think what the miners objected to, at least what I objected to, as a miner, was the way they were brought in. There are quite a few Italians, and Poles, Ukrainians and European volunteer workers in this area *now*. Poles are almost Yorkshire Poles now, Ukrainians still work in local collieries. They were brought in and absorbed in a better way than Hungarians, who were introduced without any prior consultation. I think it's the manner we objected to rather than the principle. They would have been absorbed, had it been done properly.

**John Rex:** Why is it, that although this is a nationalised industry, one still finds people reacting in terms of the law of the jungle in their negotiations over wages, in their attitude to immigrants, and so on?

**Mrs. Freeman:** I think miners are to some extent to blame. I've heard Harry come home and talk about the miners in the pit, and they don't want to accept so much less than the next man. If they can get a bit more by working two hours more, they'll do it. But it's only the environment they've grown up in, having to fight for every penny. It'll be a long time before that dies out, particularly as there is no security in the wage they get.

**John Rex:** You think it's unlikely that they will ever adopt an overall system of day wage claim?

**Jim Donlon:** I shouldn't say that it was unlikely. But the miners will have to be perhaps educated towards believing that they can accept this and be really well paid. You see, they think that if they don't fight for each halfpenny, well, they just won't get it. They will tell you that they don't go down the pit for fun. They go down there for money, not because they like the job. This system of contract work leads to danger; people take risks to get their stint filled up. But if there was a different system altogether, where a man was sure of his wage for a reasonable day's work and had some safeguard and security for the future, I think that he would be happier.

**John Rex:** In the character of Davie and elsewhere, Sigal seems to be suggesting that many people would in fact like to get out of Dinlock, but they can't see any way in which they could get out. How do you people feel about it?

**Harry Freeman:** I enjoy living in a place like Dinlock. I've a choice, I work at Barnsley, I'm travelling eight miles there and eight miles back, but I think I prefer to live in a place like this, where there

is a thriving community, rather than in a place where there is no community life whatever. Clancy Sigal does say in his book that he admires this type of community, for there is genuine public and not just an apathetic mass. The new institutions have not yet destroyed the autonomy of the village and there's something to cherish about that. This sense of brotherhood and comradeship doesn't exist outside a mining community, and I think this is one of the most valuable aspects.

**Mrs. McVeagh:** I think it's probably true that a lot of people think they would like to leave it. And what Harry says about his father going to live in a town is only typical of anybody leaving a village—their own community—for a new one. But I still think that Clancy Sigal and the people like Davie in the book are quite right, that it is a life which is lacking in many ways, in spite of the comradeship. The club life which he describes is very accurate. *Coal is Our Life*, in 1954, also found that this club life was still very rife, that everybody indulged in it, and that the women were shut out during the week except on the days when they didn't go to the clubs. Well this is all very true, but what else is there to do? It isn't the fault of the mining community, it's the way the mining communities were built up, with no facilities for any sort of cultural life.

**Mrs. Goodwin:** I often feel that I would like to leave because I think we lead a very narrow life within the village. You don't seem to have any opportunity, or only within very narrow limits, of discussion on any really intellectual level at all. Yet I'm afraid that if I did leave I should be like a lot of other people. I should feel a foreigner, I should want to come back again.

**John Rex:** One of the things that Sigal says is that Barnsley seems very far away indeed.

**Harry Freeman:** I think that's wrong myself. You can go around this locality and find that quite a sizeable proportion of miners own cars and don't stick to their own little local as much as they used to do. You can go twenty miles away and you'll find miners in their cars together with miners from further afield.

**John Rex:** I think we can wind up now. Let me just say that the whole purpose of this book, I think, and the whole interest of Dinlock to people outside, is precisely that communities like this have played a very important part indeed in the building up of the socialist movement. When we're thinking about the socialist movement in the future it is very important to have a look—and an honest look—at the values of a community of this type and I think that the people here tonight have in fact been pretty honest in looking at their own community. I think that Sigal in his way, although he is an outsider and limited by lack of knowledge and so on, has tried to take a fairly honest and unromantic look at the community, and I'm sure that your contributions will be very helpful in taking this discussion further.

# Republicanism After The Restoration

Christopher Hill

*"The deeds of the cursed and the conquered, that were wise before their time". (William Morris, *The Pilgrims of Hope*).*

## I

300 YEARS ago the first and so far the only English Republic came to an end, after 11 years of existence. In those years England, reduced to a state of impotence and contempt under Charles I, had suddenly become a great European power, and had initiated a policy of commercial and colonial expansion which was to last for over 250 years. Yet in May 1660, Charles II returned to England amid general acclamations, and the republican leaders were publicly hanged, disembowelled and quartered. The cynical and witty King observed that it must have been his own fault that he had been abroad so long, for he saw nobody that did not protest he had ever wished for his restoration.

There will be plenty of banalities talked this year about the suitability of monarchy to the British tradition, national character, etc., etc. It may be worth considering in the pages of the *New Left Review* why the English republic failed, and what happened to the republican tradition after 1660.

The Commonwealth was brought into existence in 1649 by men very few of whom were theoretical republicans. After Charles I had been defeated in the civil war, first the "Presbyterian" majority in the Long Parliament, then the "Independent" Grandees (who commanded the New Model Army, though they were only a minority in the House of Commons) tried to negotiate a settlement with the King. Charles, obsessed with the notion that his function was divine, and that his enemies needed him more than he needed them, played all parties off against one another and instigated a second civil war in 1648. Meanwhile, outside Parliament, outside the ranks of the men of property who had hitherto taken it for granted that ruling the country was their exclusive prerogative, a republican party had grown up—the Levellers. They drew their strength from those who had been the driving force in the war against the King—the artisans and small traders of London, the sectarian congregations of the capital, the Home Counties and East Anglia, and from the rank and file of the New Model Army, especially its yeoman cavalry. The Levellers called for abolition of monarchy and House of Lords, and for a wide extension and redistribution of the franchise so as to make Parliament representative of the men of small property; and for legal, social and economic reform in the interests of greater equality. In 1647 they came near to capturing control of the Army through an Army Council containing elected representatives of the rank and file.

The fact that Charles had provoked a second civil war greatly strengthened the hands of those who wanted to bring the Man of Blood to justice. To maintain their own position, Cromwell and the "Independent" leaders opened discussions with the Levellers, envisaging a more democratic constitution. Meanwhile the King was hurried to the block, whilst the Levellers protested that he should be tried not by a military junta but by a court truly representative of the people of England. Once their coup had succeeded the generals believed they could do without the embarrassing support of the Levellers and abandoned all talk of democratic reform. The Leveller leaders were imprisoned, and in May 1649 a revolt of regiments sympathetic to them was suppressed at Burford.

So the English republic was set up and ruled by men who, like Cromwell, would have preferred constitutional monarchy. After the suppression of the Levellers, the Commonwealth had no popular basis. Its authority depended on the power of the Army, which was rapidly purged of democratic elements. The franchise was indeed redistributed (1653), but not widened. There were no legal, social or economic reforms to protect the small men. The government's main achievements—the conquest of Ireland and Scotland, the aggressive commercial foreign policy—were opposed by the democrats. And these policies were very expensive. Together with the maintenance of a vast Army for internal police purposes, they necessitated far heavier taxation than any known under the monarchy. The taxes fell in large part on the men of small property.

But the men of large property too disliked this taxation and the Army's dictatorship. In order to disband the Army they wished to establish a limited monarchy, whether with a Cromwell or a Stuart as sovereign was immaterial, though after Oliver's death in 1658 the inability of his son Richard to control the Army drove many of his father's supporters to look to the King over the water. The generals, more and more isolated, were forced (as in 1648–9) to turn to the democratic republicans for support. The men of property refused to pay taxes. The troops were forced to live on free quarter, and so property was further endangered. In the bitterly cold winter of 1659–60 prices soared and public order trembled in the balance. Shops could not be opened safely. The law courts ceased to function, and "where the law takes not place", a gentleman noted, "there is no such thing as property". Levellers reappeared in London. The rank and file of the Army began to organise again, as they had done between 1647 and 1649, Arms were distributed to the radical sectaries. Quakers were appointed

J.P.s. "Many a time have I heard them say", wrote Richard Baxter of the "rabble" in 1659, "It will never be a good world while knights and gentlemen make us laws, that are chosen for fear and do but oppress us, and do not know the peoples' sores. It will never be well with us till we have Parliaments of countrymen like ourselves that know our wants". In that year it seemed for a moment possible that the world might indeed be turned upside down. "All this stir of the Republicans", Baxter thought, aimed "to make the seed of the Serpent to be the sovereign rulers of the earth"; for it was a theological axiom with the well-to-do that "the major part are not only likely but certain to be bad".

### Saved From The Bloody Multitude

Baxter and his kind need not have worried so much. For 1659 was not 1649. The Leveller movement had disintegrated. John Lilburne, its chief leader, died in jail in 1657, a Quaker. Other leaders had got on in the world, by land speculation or as professional officers. Others again had abandoned politics, or entered into futile conspiracy, even with Royalists. Many of the disillusioned rank and file democrats had emigrated to America, and more were to follow after 1660. (Indeed democratic republican influences are easier to trace in the American colonies after 1660 than in England.) Other former Leveller supporters turned to the wilder forms of sectarianism, such as Fifth Monarchism, in the hope that Christ would himself intervene to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth, since human political action had failed. The bogey word in 1659–60 was "fanatics", not Levellers: sectaries and especially Anabaptists and millenarians now led the democratic movement.

Nevertheless, contemporaries thought the alternatives were clear. A former Parliamentarian, Sir George Booth, in 1659 saw "a mean and schismatical party" threatening "the nobility and understanding commons". (Sir George, who helped to beat the mean party, got a peerage in 1660). A royalist saw "the Anabaptists and their adherents" opposed by "those having great estates". A Scot thought the alternative to a restoration of monarchy was the rule of armed Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchists and Quakers. The physician and biographer of General Monck put "gentlemen of good estates" against a "violent junto of robbers and republicans". "The essence of a free state", wrote a pamphleteer in 1660, was that the gentry must be "reduced to the condition of the vulgar". Many men, Milton thought in April of that year, were prepared to prostitute religion and liberty because they believed that "nothing but monarchy can restore trade". The Rev. Henry Newcombe was expelled from his living by the restoration government, and his became "the despised and cheated party"; yet when he looked back in 1662 he felt it had been worth it, since England had been saved from "a giddy, hot-headed, bloody multitude".

So Charles II was restored not by popular clamour,

as the textbooks suggest. He was restored by the men of property; by Monck, the one general who could pay his troops, in close co-operation with the City of London. The rumps that were roasted in the streets of London were paid for by rich citizens, and their money was well spent. Once monarchy was restored, former Cavaliers could help to take arms away from the "persons of no degree and quality" whom the republicans had armed, and restore them to "the nobility and principal gentlemen throughout the kingdom". The writer is Clarendon, Lord Chancellor in the restoration government. "It is the privilege . . . the prerogative of the common people of England", he told Parliament in 1661, "to be represented by the greatest and learnedest and wealthiest and wisest persons that can be chosen out of the nation: and the confounding the Commons of England . . . with the common people of England was the first ingredient into that accursed dose . . . a Commonwealth". Clarendon was almost echoing what Ireton had told the Levellers at Putney 14 years earlier: that the rank and file Parliamentary soldiers had fought not for the vote, but to have the benefit of laws made by their betters in Parliament. Former Parliamentarians and former Cavaliers now spoke the same language against the radicals: and so did Charles II himself, who said "Without the safety and dignity of the monarchy, neither religion nor property can be preserved". "The restoration", Laski summed it up, "was a combination of men of property in all classes against a social revolution which they vaguely felt to be threatening".

## II

So the republic collapsed, ingloriously. A white terror followed. The savage legislation of the Clarendon Code expelled opponents of the monarchy from their natural strongholds, the government of the boroughs; and forced underground the sectarian congregations which had formed the revolutionary cells of the preceding two decades. The organisation of petitions by the lower orders was prohibited. The Act of Settlement of 1662 anticipated an Italian Fascist decree which authorised the police to drive back to his native parish any person who lacked visible means of support. A rigid censorship ended the relative freedom of political discussion which had existed in the sixteen-forties and had been regained in 1659–60. Printing, one of Charles II's Secretaries of State declared, was "a sort of appeal to the people". For 19 years after 1660 only government newspapers were published legally.

Nor should we underestimate the effectiveness of the deliberate propaganda of the Anglican Church, again restored to a monopoly position. "People", King Charles the Martyr had observed, "are governed by the pulpit more than the sword in time of peace"; and the Church of England did its best. When the rebel Duke of Monmouth claimed in 1685 to die a protestant of the

Church of England, a divine said to him on the scaffold "My Lord, if you be of the Church of England, you must acknowledge the doctrine of non-resistance to be true". For 25 years every parson in the kingdom had thundered against resistance to the Lord's Anointed. The widely read Anglican *The Whole Duty of Man* told the poor "to be content with whatever entertainment thou findest here [on earth], knowing thou art upon thy journey to a place of infinite happiness, which will make an abundant amends for all the uneasiness and hardship thou canst suffer in the way". In 1652 the Digger Gerrard Winstanley had denounced priests who "tell the poor people that they must be content with their poverty, and that they shall have their heaven hereafter". Why, Winstanley had asked, "may not we have our heaven here (that is, a comfortable livelihood in the earth), and heaven hereafter too?" One sees the advantage to the rich of the restoration of ecclesiastical censorship in 1660.

We can also perhaps understand the disgust and disillusion with which many of the democrats withdrew from a political struggle in which they felt they had been betrayed. After 1660 most of the sects decided that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, and had enough to do to maintain a precarious underground existence, without indulging in political activity which would have exposed them to savage government reprisals. The hitherto bellicose Quakers issued their first pacifist declaration in January 1661, after the failure of a Fifth Monarchist revolt. Even this declaration was directed against acceptance of military service for Charles II, and was part of a campaign of passive resistance. The Quakers were still politically active in the sixteen-seventies, when William Penn was election agent for the republican Algernon Sidney. Only after the aristocratic Whigs had let them down in 1681 and 1685 did the Quakers turn to emigration, a refuge which they had previously condemned. Much of the Leveller tradition of equality and democracy was inherited and handed on by the radical sects, who exhibited magnificent courage in resisting persecution under Charles II and James II. But—in England if not in Scotland—it was for the most part a passive resistance. Bunyan still takes as his symbol of the common man a man with a burden on his back. But the burden falls off only in the presence of the cross, and Christian had left even his wife and children behind when he started on his pilgrimage. Some at least of those with whom Bunyan had served in the Parliamentary armies had hoped to relieve other men of their burdens, as well as themselves; and on earth too. By the time dissent won toleration in 1689 it had ceased to be politically dangerous. Those who benefitted by the Toleration Act were sober, respectable, industrious citizens, narrow, sectarian and unpolitical in their outlook. All but the most hypocritical "occasional conformists" among them continued to be excluded from political life and from the universities by the Anglican tests. So revolutionary Puritanism sank into nonconformity.

### III

Yet though the republic collapsed in 1660, it had left its mark on men's minds. Charles II might date his reign from 30 January 1649, and lawyers might speak of the years between 1649 and 1660 as "the interregnum". But they could not be forgotten. They had shown that government could be successfully carried on without King or House of Lords or Bishops. Moreover, although the men who ruled the Commonwealth were not theoretical republicans, the Levellers, Milton and Harrington were; and their writings had been widely disseminated and discussed. There had been far more freedom of discussion in the sixteen-forties and fifties, and far more real popular participation in such discussion, at least in London, than ever before and ever again until the 19th century. Republicanism by 1660 was by no means a mere academic speculation. Rude and vigorous opposition to monarchy was expressed in an unmistakably popular idiom. "A pox on all kings", said a London lady in 1662; "she did not give a turd for never a king in England, for she never did lie with any". A glazier of Wapping, two years earlier, "would run his knife into [the King] to kill him". He would gladly spend 5/- to celebrate Charles's execution: "he did not care if he were the hangman himself". Yorkshire yeomen in the early sixties said they "lived as well when there was no king", and hoped to do so again. "Cromwell and Ireton were as good as the King". "All is traitors that do fight for the King". A Surrey man "hoped ere long to trample in the King's and Bishops' blood". Very many similar remarks have survived, made by those ordinary people who, according to the textbooks, were delighted to see Charles II back. A constable who had helped to hand some regicides over for execution in 1660 found that in consequence he had "quite lost his trade among the factious people of Southwark".

### The Levellers Reappear

Men calling themselves Levellers were in revolt in Worcestershire in 1670, and men so called by their enemies figured frequently as bogies in political speeches and sermons. There were continuous plots—Venner's rising in London and many other conspiracies in 1661; Tonge's Plot in 1662, Yorkshire Plots in 1663 and 1665, the Pentland Rising in Scotland in 1666 (led by an old Parliamentary officer), and supporting movements in England. Some of these conspiracies were no doubt fomented by agents provocateurs, freely used at this period; and the government for its own purposes certainly made the most of the danger of revolution. But the plots witness to the existence of a great deal of discontent. In 1668–9 the royal ministers Buckingham and Shaftesbury were said to be leading the old Commonwealth faction, and the Duke of Buckingham declared himself a republican. There was an organised illegal printing press, and continuous contacts were maintained between the underground opposition to Charles II and the exiles in Holland, Between 1678 and

1681, in the excitement of the Popish Plot, the Leveller sea-green colours reappeared in the streets of London: the Whig Green Ribbon Club took its name from them. The Rye House Plot of 1683 centred on a house owned by the former Leveller Richard Rumbold, famous for his dying words on the scaffold in 1685: "I am sure there was no man marked of God above another; for none comes into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and spurred to ride him". (The sentence was quoted, whether consciously or not, by Thomas Jefferson a few days before his death in 1826. It was in fact a Leveller commonplace). Finally in 1685 Argyll's invasion of Scotland and Monmouth's of south-western England were both accompanied by many ex-Levellers and republicans, and won wide support among the common people. Their defeat marked the end of an epoch.

### Men of Property Against the Mob

Throughout the generation 1647–85 the conflict continued between aristocratic and democratic republicans. We have seen how the two parted company after 1649. In 1660 even Milton, convinced republican though he was, thought it was necessary "to well qualify and refine elections: not committing all to the noise and shouting of a rude multitude", but rather to a perpetual oligarchy: that this was the "ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth". Even Marvell, toughest of republicans under Charles II, had opposed the military leaders who tried to set up a republic in 1659. He was probably right to doubt their sincerity: yet it was these divisions that made the restoration possible. It is hardly a coincidence that two of the most prominent republicans were a Duke and an Earl, Buckingham and Rochester. There is no doubt about the strength of these men's beliefs. Under Charles II Marvell wrote:

"England rejoice, thy redemption draws nigh;  
Thy oppression together with kingship shall die.  
A commonwealth, a commonwealth we proclaim to the nation,  
The gods have repented the King's restoration".

Rochester asked:

"What can there be in kings divine?  
The most are wolves, goats, sheep or swine. . . .  
Then farewell sacred majesty,  
Let's pull all brutish tyrants down;  
Where men are born and still live free,  
Here every head doth wear a crown".  
"I hate all monarchs and the thrones they sit on.  
From the Hector of France [Louis XIV]  
to the cully of Britain [Charles II]".

Yet such men, for all their courageous convictions, had no confidence in the democratic forces. Throughout Charles II's reign, although the two wings of the republicans had to co-operate, there was latent conflict between them. During the Popish Plot Shaftesbury's use of the London populace lost him much support among the propertied Whigs. Even so he drew back when Charles II called his bluff in 1681, and the apparently united Whig party collapsed. In 1685

Monmouth's revolt was the last fling of the democratic cause, to which the weavers and dissenters of the south-western counties rallied, and small traders like Daniel Defoe rode down from London to add their support. But the Whig gentry held aloof, and Monmouth was persuaded by his few aristocratic supporters to claim the crown in the hope of establishing his non-republican respectability. Disillusion with Monmouth, who grovelled to James II in a vain attempt to save his life, and Jeffrey's ferocious Bloody Assizes so weakened popular republicanism that when James's folly united the propertied classes against him, the way seemed clear for William of Orange and the aristocratic Whigs. Yet even at the end of 1687 Gilbert Burnet noted that "a rebellion of which he [William] should not retain the command would certainly establish a commonwealth". Fortunately for them, the men of property invited William in time, and he brought a large professional army with him; so James could be hustled off the throne without danger of popular revolt. When Edmund Ludlow returned from his 29 years of exile, thinking the day of the Good Old Cause had dawned at last, he was promptly whisked out of the country at the request of the House of Commons. In Macaulay's words, William "ordered the magistrates to act with vigour against all unlawful assemblies. Nothing in the history of our Revolution is more deserving of admiration and of imitation than the manner in which the two parties in the Convention [Parliament], at the very moment at which their disputes ran highest, joined like one man to resist the dictation of the mob of the capital". This—written in 1848—makes the point that "our revolution" was opposed to and forestalled that of lower-class republicans. Henceforth monarchy was something very different from what it had been, since now it was subordinated to the laws voted by the representatives of the men of big property. 1685 was the last revolt of the men of small property.

### IV

The men of small property: here we have the clue to their failure. As capitalism developed, more and more peasants and artisans were to lose their economic independence. This process was very slow and long-drawn-out; but the small proprietors were at no stage a secure foundation on which to build a revolutionary party. Even in the 17th century they may not have formed a majority of Englishmen. Even the Levellers would have excluded paupers and wage-labourers from the franchise: and Gregory King's table of 1696 suggests that these may have amounted to half the population. There was sense in their exclusion, since men wholly dependent on their social superiors for livelihood could not vote freely by show of hands. (The republican Harrington's much-derided schemes for voting by dropping balls into urns were intended to solve the problem of secret voting for a largely illiterate population.) Yet by refusing the vote to half of their countrymen, the Levellers placed themselves in a

position different only in degree from that of the Grandee Independents. They spoke in the name of "the people", but they meant only some of the people. When the Diggers (who called themselves True Levellers) advocated the abolition of private property in the name of the unpropertied, the Leveller leaders had sharply disavowed them. So in a sense they justified the sleight of hand by which Locke in 1690 spoke of "the people" when he meant the men of big property. He had a big blind spot, the Leveller a little blind spot.

Yet in another sense the Levellers were right in their day and generation. The Diggers were a nine days' wonder: they did not succeed in organising the unpropertied. Of those entirely dependent on wages Mr. Ogg rightly says that "neither contemporary nor modern economists can explain how they lived". Baxter's poor husbandmen in 1691 were "usually so poor that they cannot have time to read a chapter in the Bible or to pray in their families. They come in weary from their labour, so that they are fitter to sleep than to read or pray". The whole circumstances of their existence made such men incapable of political understanding and therefore of any political action except merely negative rioting. It needed another century and a half of capitalist development (and of painful struggles for trade union organisation, the first evidence for which dates from the later 17th century), before the urban poor were transformed into a politically effective working-class movement.

## Failure of Popular Republicanism

So we should see the conflict between aristocratic and democratic republicans in the 17th century as a tragedy on both sides—a tragedy not without its similarities to those which have been enacted in eastern Europe in our own days. The Levellers spoke in the name of a people who would have disavowed them. When they put forward proposals for a limited widening of the franchise, their enemies distorted this into a demand for full manhood suffrage. Given the pressure of landlords and parsons on the poor and illiterate and ignorant, it could not unreasonably be argued that manhood suffrage would lead to a restoration of the monarchy, and that any significant extension was a gamble. The aristocratic republicans despaired of the people. Yet what was their alternative? Military dictatorship, which Hugh Peter had hoped to use "to teach peasants to understand liberty", was used by the generals to further their own ambitions. After 1660, and still more after 1688, the aristocratic republicans had no real programme, only an attitude. They felt that the flummery of monarchy was an insult to human dignity; but in society as then constituted only a minority of the population was in a position to exercise free political choice; and most of this minority wanted a king to help to keep the lower orders in their place.

The most remarkable analysis of the reasons for the failure of the 17th century popular movement was made in a letter written to Milton in 1659:

"You complain of the non-progressency of the nation, and of its retrograde motion of late, in liberty and spiritual truths. It is much to be bewailed; but yet let us pity human frailty. When those who had made deep protestations of their zeal for our liberty . . . being instated in power shall betray the good thing committed to them . . . and, by that power which we gave them to win us liberty, hold us fast in chains; what can we poor people do? . . . Besides, whilst people are not free but straightened in accommodations for life, their spirits will be dejected and servile. . . . There should be an improving of our native commodities, as our manufactures, our fishery, our fens, forests and commons, and our trade at sea, etc., which would give the body of the nation a comfortable subsistence."

But that was to look far ahead into the capitalist epoch. The years between the defeat of the Good Old Cause and the rise of the labour movement is the age of the "mob". (The word does not occur before 1688). Between 1660 and 1688 the London populace was Whig and anti-papist; after 1688 mobs could sometimes be used by Tories and even Jacobites, because the establishment was now Whig. It is significant that the weavers of Southwark, old-style craftsmen and dissenters almost to a man, opposed the church and king mobs in 1709. Outside London, in the early 18th century, the Jacobites found support from the Derbyshire miners (whose ancestors had been Levellers in 1649), and from the weavers of the Monmouth area who had not lifted a finger for William of Orange in 1688. Until the rise of true radicalism in the late 18th century, "Tory democracy" was an uneasy and wholly negative alliance of the two defeated classes of the 17th century—the backwoods gentry and the lowest urban classes—against their bourgeois and aristocratic rulers.

So by 1685 democratic republicanism, the democracy of the small proprietors, was dead; in 1688 aristocratic republicanism, the republicanism of the men of big property, had achieved most of its aims within the framework of limited monarchy. Aristocratic republicanism lived on in the early 18th century rather as an academic speculation, a philosophical attitude, than as a political creed. The Calves Head Club celebrated the anniversary of Charles I's execution "in scandalous and opprobrious feasting and jesting". But it is significant that a calves head dinner on that day in 1728 (in Oxford, of all revolutionary centres!) shocked Whigs no less than Tories, since the Hanoverian King was now himself a Whig. Six years later the London Club came to an end when its members were rabbled.

## Aristocratic Republicans

Aristocratic republicanism has recently been studied by Professor Caroline Robbins in her recent book, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman* (though she does not herself distinguish adequately between democratic and aristocratic republicans). She shows how the torch was handed on from the 17th century republicans by men like William Molyneux, Robert Molesworth, Walter Moyle, John Trenchard, John Toland the deist, to the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, themselves republicans without much use for democracy, and to Price and Priestley.

The most important figure in the tradition was Mrs. Catherine Macaulay, who from the seventeen-sixties published her very popular *History of England* in the 17th century, which revived memories of the 17th century revolutionaries just when the Wilkesite agitation was reviving popular radicalism. Henceforth the appeal to 17th century example was common form among the radicals. Mrs. Macaulay's brother, Alderman Sawbridge, was Wilkes's right-hand man in the City; she herself was actively involved in radical politics in England, and intimately associated with republican leaders in America and France. In the 17th century the leading examples of successful republics—Venice, the Netherlands—had been burgher oligarchies; in the 18th century the American and French Revolutions offered models of more democratic republics. Tom Paine preached a republicanism of the common man appropriate to this new atmosphere. It made the republicanism of the aristocratic Commonwealthsmen an armchair anachronism. Paine's works were eagerly read by those plebeians to whom the aristocratic republicans had never cared or dared to appeal. The

way lay forward through the Corresponding Societies of the 'nineties on to Chartism and the working-class movement, in which at first republicanism was widespread. The Chartists Bronterre O'Brien pronounced the working class's epitaph on the aristocratic republicanism of the 17th and 18th centuries:

"Even the establishment of our 'commonwealth' after the death of Charles I was a mere political revolution. It gave parliamentary privilege a temporary triumph over royal prerogative. It enabled a few thousand landowners to disenthral themselves from the burdens of feudal services, and to throw upon the people at large the expenses of maintaining the government. . . . For the millions it did nothing."

It is not the job of the present article to discuss why the republicanism of its early days was abandoned by the labour movement in England. Let us rather recall that what survived of the popular republican tradition in England in the difficult years after 1660 was handed on in discussions in coffee-houses, which emerged as centres of seditious activity as the nonconformist congregations subsided into sectarian isolation and political inactivity.

## Poem

# What Happened Later

### On hearing Harry the Stockman is to be evicted

*Had it been so, there would have been a legend  
How the innkeeper who slept in his bed  
That night, never slept more, his eyelids withered,  
Gnawed by the living fat worm without end.  
But it was not so: who pronounced the hotel full  
And went back to his moll, his wine, his honey,  
Flushed, copulated, belched, then gave cold money,  
Noticed no star, knelt to no mucky Infant, dull  
Spent his days in ease, died not uncomfortable,  
Left in his will a relic of his power  
Over his wife's affection, over his property; sour  
Arrogance of ownership sat at his subject table  
Long after he was gone. The Child was hung,  
Whipped, scoffed, despised, denied, and in disgrace  
Died crying for his Father's coup de grâce,  
His Mother watching: and thus the pattern continues  
among  
Humanity. 'Heaven!' some cry—are tortured, killed;  
'Rewards are not on earth!'; shrieked in the flames  
Echoes in calendars' martyred believers' names.  
These are the lunatic fringe: with paunch well filled,  
Backed with sound property, his limbs at ease,  
Sits on the scaffold, watches the pyre smoke,  
Dives, the obstinate landlord, in rich cloak  
Of office, manufacturer of household needs, cheese-*

David Holbrook

*Cutter, swindler, next to the prissy-lipped old crone  
Whose husband cheats within the law  
At the Exchange, or sells a rotten raw  
Powder as rare, and thus presumes herself a  
privileged one  
(Shouldering aside the pregnant mother at a door,  
Bullying servants, making intolerable  
Life for her tenants): these are the sort that rule,  
These rich are always with us, free: no more  
Conscience, humanity, no more capacity for self-efface  
Than hogs stampeding for their swill and hole:  
'Jesus of Nazareth was a poor brat and a fool',  
They inward shrug, draw their rugs closer. 'That's the  
place  
I'm pulling down, that derelict old stable: the man  
Who lives there has lived there for forty years,  
Raises our stock: but he's old now. Cares  
Too much for his rights—he asked again  
For sanitation. So old and quaint, my dear,  
But just the cost of keeping the roof on!  
He's got to go.' So he who took the Virgin in  
moves on,  
Hoping to hear the voice of God: money alone talks  
here.*

# The Bandit's Story

from V. Dudintsev's *New Year's Fable*

translated by Alfred Dressler

"ONCE UPON a time, in a far-away kingdom—well, actually this curious incident happened in our town, a few years' ago. On a Sunday afternoon, near a well-protected spot in our Park of Culture some sixty, or maybe even a hundred, well-dressed gentlemen met for some kind of discourse which they had decided to hold in the open air. Later it became known that in our park a sort of symposium had been held of bandits and thieves who belonged to what they call their 'establishment'. These people have their strict rules. Any infringement is punished with death. To join the 'establishment' an applicant has to be recommended by two guarantors. A new member's chest is tattooed with a slogan: a few words only, just to make sure he is immediately recognised as belonging to the group . . .

The Congress of this bandit 'establishment' passed six death sentences, five of which have been carried out. So far they have failed to catch the sixth condemned man because the whole affair has become rather involved. Let me tell you first of all who this sixth man was and what he was guilty of. He was the chief, the president, or in their lingo the 'pasha' of their set, the oldest and most cunning of the bandits. He was serving time in one of the provincial prisons and it was there, I expect, in his seclusion that it occurred to him that, really, he had achieved nothing in life and had gained nothing; and time was running short. The whole purpose of a bandit's life—he said to himself—is to appropriate in the easiest possible manner other people's wealth: gold, expensive things. But there has been a catastrophic depreciation in the value and the prestige of things in human society".

"Your bandit, then, was a bit of a theoretician!" our cadres manager interrupted ironically.

"Well, yes, he was a thoughtful person. . . . This criminal who had done so much harm, grew reticent and began to read books. Books are a terrific force! He read a lot of books. He was in no hurry to get out of prison—it suited him to read and think behind bars; and his brother-bandits supplied their chief with any book he wanted even if it was hidden away securely in the State archives. Now. . . . Well, that's how he came to see that the prestige of expensive things was being fatally deflated. In the distant past rich people, princes, used to fence off parts of the sea to breed some sort of plaice. And these fish they fed on human flesh—on their slaves. To serve such a fish at a banquet was considered in those days to be very smart. But now we can't even bear thinking of our ancestors' diversions. Gold once was a nameless metal slumbering untouched in the depths of the earth. Then man gave it a name and value. And it became the fashion to adorn one's dress and weapons with glittering gold. But now none of us would venture out with a gold chain across his belly, or even with a

golden tie-clip. The prestige of gold is falling. And precious fabrics? There's no doubt that even our most precious modern fabrics are going out of fashion forever. To show off expensive things now is a sign of spiritual backwardness."

"This bandit of yours gave short shrift to material values, by God! But what I'd like to know is what is going to take the place of things?" asked our cadres manager. He was a little irritated by this story because he flaunted an expensive padded overcoat, and his wife on a casual visit to our lab. had been wearing a rich fox-fur.

"What things do you mean? There are things and things. The bandit was aware of this. He realised that the worship of things would inexorably be replaced by the beauty of the human spirit that can be neither bought nor stolen. You can't make anybody love you by force of arms. Spiritual beauty is free. As soon as gold and velvet retreated, it occupied their position. And now Cinderellas in their cotton frocks triumph over princesses draped in silk. Because the whole value of a cheap dress is in the beauty of its style, and this is no longer a material value. The design of a dress expresses the tastes and the character of its creator and wearer. And it is not for nothing that many princesses—those who have still preserved some humanity—have begun to imitate Cinderella. And if we meet a woman nowadays draped in furs and precious fabrics, we no longer admire the splendour of her dress, we recoil from the spiritual monster who casts herself before people.

My bandit was aware of all this. And all of a sudden he realised that throughout his life he had never owned such 'things' as people's recognition, human friendship and true love—all his life he had aspired to what has no value. In fact, he experienced something akin to a currency reform. Well. . . ." The speaker's voice became husky; he cleared his throat. "And the people, the love, the friendship he wanted existed on earth. And he had known it all along. . . . There had been a woman. . . . But now he could not even show himself to her; he couldn't risk to reveal his identity.

Anyway, this man wrote down all his thoughts in a long letter to his brother-bandits and announced that he was resigning from his high office to join the society of normal, working people; and that he intended to win—by some outstanding feat—what so far in his life he had not known, and towards which he was drawn, as the saying goes, with his whole being. This letter of his the prison administration printed as a special leaflet. You will understand, of course, that it was a document of immense force, and that it was important to exploit it.

. . . The bandit, of course, knowing the rules of the 'establishment', realised that the brethren would never

forgive his betrayal and that somewhere a knife was already being sharpened for him. He wanted to live at least a few more years to accomplish the purpose that had led him to take this step. He escaped from prison even before the fraternity had passed judgment on him. He was rich and—as always in fairy tales—he found skilled doctors who changed the skin of his face, his hands, his head and even replaced his hair. They also in some way or another changed his voice. . . .

He obtained unexceptionable personal documents and became a new man. In three years he finished two

university courses. He has conceived a truly great idea and now he is engaged on the last stages of his work. He wants to benefit mankind. . . .”

*The former banit chief, now a scientist at the Sun Research Institute, is knifed a few hours after telling his story. His colleague, the young scientist, inspired by the bandit's 'conversion', repudiates the 'worship of things', and completes the bandit's work: to bring light, by condemning the rays of the sun, to the people on the dark hemisphere of the imaginary planet of V. Dudintsev's New Year's Fable, published in Novy Mir, No.1, 1960.*

## Two Television Documentaries

Kit Coppard

OUR SOCIETY contains many divisions besides those of class. Some of these divisions are of a kind in which ‘they’ are detached from ‘us’ by some special expertise, or because they operate as relatively closed communities—such as hospitals, the police, the probation service—which directly enter our lives only in times of trouble. Because of this, these communities hold a fascination for many of us—a fascination often tinged with fear or resentment.

The television authorities have been shrewd enough to exploit this interest. *Emergency Ward 10* has been followed by several other programmes of a semi-documentary type in which ‘we’ are able to experience the work of ‘them’ without a trip in an ambulance or black maria. The two programmes I want to deal with—*Dixon of Dock Green* and *Probation Officer*—are at least in part concerned with describing the work and social impact of the police and probation service; they are also committed to the firm but somewhat vague duty to entertain. It is an axiom (it may be nonsense but it’s an axiom all the same) among practitioners in almost every mass medium that entertainment and instruction conflict. Do these programmes try to reconcile this apparent conflict, and if so do they succeed?

*Dixon* (subtitle, ‘Some Stories of a London Policeman’; signature tune, ‘An Ordinary Copper’) is a product of what some call the Ted Willis factory. It has the slowness, predictability and rigid structure of some traditional ceremony. Though the script appears to vary from week to week, the show has its own hard and fast set of rules. At the beginning, Dixon appears in front of the police station, touches his forelock and announces the text for today. During the course of the story (whatever the plot) two things must happen: the audience’s excitement must be relieved by a short break for risibility; and Dixon the Family Man must be worked into a sketch involving his daughter, son-in-law policeman and sundry extras in a tea-drinking ritual. Finally, Dixon again appears in front of the police station, points the message preached in the show and

speeds us on our way with a quotation from the highway code.

There was the possibility (and Willis might once have grabbed it) of making this, within its fictionalised setting, an entertaining and informative account of London police work. The depressing thing is that this possibility does not even seem to have been realised, far less attempted. It fails as entertainment because of the weakness of Dixon himself. While the show is written and produced almost entirely from his point of view (it is not so much about law-breakers as about how Dixon-gets-his-man) he resolutely fails to come alive. He is not so much a type as a piece of jetsam salvaged from *The Blue Lamp*. So free is he of personality or even of idiosyncrasy, one feels that to catch him picking his nose would be like the revelation of some great truth.

The programme fails as documentary because it shows little interest in the subtleties of the relationship between police and public or in the characters and motives of the law-breakers with whom it deals. There is no attempt to place Dock Green police station in some sort of community; it is a hermetically-sealed oasis surrounded by an amorphous, shifting desert in which live the masses—or rather, as Dixon would say, ‘ordinary folk, just like you and me’.

In keeping with the ritualistic flavour of the show, the general attitude towards the police and the *idea* of police) is one of reverence. Dock Green police are Men of Integrity: true, they consist of ponderous old men supported by naive cadets; granted, they may seem to have the forensic gifts of a gnat; but they’re *honest*, goddamit!

It’s easy, of course, to criticise a show of this standard. The fact is, however, that the police are an important and powerful element in our society, an element which arouses fear and dislike in many people besides law-breakers and which, at present, is under greater suspicion than ever before. Any programme about the police—even a sort of commercial for the force, like this one—carries responsibilities. And this is something

which *Dixon*, with its arid little stories and complacent social attitudes, utterly fails to grasp.

*Probation Officer* is more ambitious and deserves more serious consideration. It consists of dramatised accounts (often taken from actual case histories) of people on probation and of the help they receive from the probation officers to whom they are assigned.

The treatment is essentially one of documentary drama. The individual stories are written by three different script writers, which accounts not only for differences in approach to the subject but also, presumably, for the very uneven quality of the programme when viewed over a period of time.

### Probation Officer

The programme is not of course dealing with murderers or recidivists. Often the subjects are poor but highly-respectable citizens of suburbia, whose economic or emotional security has gradually or suddenly evaporated. Owing to pride or the spiritually isolated nature of their lives (often, too, because they cannot or will not face their problems until it is too late) they are unable to turn to friends or relations for help or sympathy. The programme usually begins at the point when the subject has tried to solve or relieve his problem by a sudden, usually unpremeditated outbreak of anti-social behaviour which has brought him into the hands of the probation service.

An important fault of the programme is reflected in its name. It is apparent that the more successful shows have been those in which the story is told in straightforward fashion from the point of view of the offender and in which the probation officer is, so to speak, simply a member of the cast. They succeed (apart from the intrinsic merits of the story) because they emotionally identify themselves (and, thus, so does the viewer) with the offender, with his predicament, with the motives and social context of the story as a whole; in other words, the story is presented not as a piece of work for the probation officer but as an incident, a crisis in someone's life which the probation service may help to alleviate.

Too many shows, however, attempt to move the centre of action from the offender to the probation officer—not in order to develop the latter's personality but to work in spurious probation office-type 'business' (one of the script writers, for instance, seems pre-occupied with dear old cockney ladies who have nothing to do with the story in hand but pop in every now and then to have a natter with the probation officer). It would be interesting to have an exploration of the probation officer's character and for the show to derive its essential conflict from the interaction between this *particular* member of the probation service and the offender and his problems. This is not, however, within the programme's terms of reference; and it is a pity, for in many shows it means that a sort of prototype or 'typical' probation officer is the central character.

The picture of the mechanics of the probation service which emerges is meagre, though this is not necessarily

a fault. Essentially the service consists of, and is as good or as bad as, the members of its staff. It is obvious that the service, like any other organisation, has bad as well as good officers. It is a shortcoming of the programme that the officers presented are not merely 'good' (this is forgivable) but all the same in the sense that one is convinced they would respond in precisely the same way to any given stimulus on the part of the offender. It is as if they are following, with the most ruthless care, some sort of guide to stock reactions printed on buff-coloured paper by the Home Office.

In spite of these and other failings, however, I believe this programme to be one of the most interesting, if not necessarily one of the best, on television at present. Its interest lies very largely in its choice of story (or rather, 'situation'). While seldom explored in depth, these situations and their development in terms of action and often remarkably good dialogue show the script writers to be aware of and interested in many of the subtle, felt-but-not-vocalised, gradual but powerful effects and pressures of industrial and suburban life.

The critics have consistently panned this programme (often for irrelevant reasons) and because this may have discouraged people from looking at it at all, I want to describe as briefly as possible one of the most successful of these shows.

### One Successful Example

It opens with police arriving at a suburban semi-detached to make an arrest. The offender, we see, is a small, unattractive man of early middle age who, it appears, has struck and severely hurt his six-year-old son; it is his wife who has called the police. The man is driven away in the police car. The next few minutes are devoted to a brief but adequate survey of the reactions of neighbours to the event and, a bit later, to the initial feelings of disgust of the probation officer to whom the man is assigned after the court case. The offender is uncommunicative and hostile to the probation officer at first, though it's clear he is shocked and baffled by his attack on the child. A picture emerges here and in subsequent action of a mild, honest weak and unsophisticated man who is completely under the influence of his wife. She is younger than him, tense and fanatically houseproud. It turns out she is in a highly neurotic state about the local status contest and has constantly driven him to 'improve' himself and to provide the sort of home and material surroundings which the neighbourhood requires but which are beyond his means. He is deep in hire-purchase debt in order to placate his wife; yet one sees that his lack of ambition and boredom with the whole mechanism of social climbing separate him from his wife in a way that no status symbols surmount. His attack on his son came about when, on top of this, the latter started pestering him for an expensive birthday present.

When interviewed by the probation officer the wife, who has sent the boy and his sister to their aunt 'where they will be safe', canalises her own frustrations and

abortive social ambitions by denouncing her husband for his brutality and unfitness to be a father. There is obviously little affection, or indeed any positive relationship, in this family, except (as becomes clear by implication) between the father and his children.

The probation officer sees his task as being to persuade the husband to make a single, decisive effort to 'normalise' his life again—to insist on his children returning home; to send back some of the luxuries he is buying on h.p., and to give up his clerk's post in favour of a much better paid (but socially less OK) job in a factory. The climax of the story comes when the husband presents these ultimatums to his wife and forces her to accept them. There is no implication of a happy ending or even the suggestion that the husband somehow wins self-respect or the respect of his wife as a result of this scene.

The foregoing does little justice to the quite consider-

able power and subtlety of this story—the relationship, now tense, now apathetic of the husband and wife and the curious formality of the conversation of these two people who have little to offer each other in love or respect. The scene at the end is particularly good: like many weak men suddenly aroused, he savagely and bitterly blames his wife not only for her faults but also for many of his own deficiencies as a husband.

This story compares well with any recent prestige productions, allotted much more time and money, of plays by other television writers. Considering it was compressed into forty minutes, it was remarkably free of the character clichés and social shorthand thrust at us by so many TV dramas. And while it hardly rises to this standard every week (and every now and then relapses into kitsch), *Probation Officer* deserves much more encouragement and enlightened criticism than it has received in the past.

## The Brighouse Defeat

James Topsell

THE FIRST by-election after the defeat of Labour in October; a knife-edge majority of 47; 'the eyes of the nation upon Brighouse and Spenborough; Boycott month in Africa Year; the Government decision to set up an early-warning station at Fylingdales: surely, the ingredients for a vital election, touching every issue which dominates our lives at the beginning of the new decade. This was the vision. This article deals with the depressing facts, and attempts to suggest why the election became instead a welter of trivialities.

The constituency is made up of three local government units, the non-county boroughs of Brighouse and Spenborough and the urban district of Heckmondwike. Brighouse has its heart in the Calder Valley and sprawls up the hillsides towards Huddersfield and Halifax. A compact town, it contains a flourishing shopping centre and a concentration of industry—light engineering and specialised ancillary textile trades.

Spenborough lies on and over the ridge separating the Calder from the Spen Valleys. The eight or so townships included in this borough fall down to Cleckheaton, beside the River Spen. It is the commercial and administrative centre.

Heckmondwike is one of the centres of the heavy woollen district. It stands in high local regard as a shopping centre, with a flourishing open market. Studded with disused non-conformist chapels, it has passed the supreme capitalist test as a little boom town with a future: Messrs. Woolworths will shortly open a department store there.

This is a division which, in a piecemeal but successful manner, is holding its own in the transition from the industrial revolution of the 19th century to the consumer

durables regime of the mid-twentieth. There are no large industrial units—none of the listed 600 firms for instance. The displacement of the old by the new has taken the form of the purchase of mills and equipment of the small manufacturer—clogs to clogs in three generations—for use as ancillary production units by larger firms. Industry is still a small scale affair.

While there is considerable slum property, this area does not contain the endless streets of back-to-back houses associated with the industrial north. Educational facilities vary from appalling church all-age schools to a secondary modern palace. Cultural activities are predominately on the parish concert level; the constituency has a number of failing cinemas and no theatre. More and more the middle-aged and the young travel to Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield and Halifax for their week-end entertainment.

The political history of the area is one of a long series of marginal victories for either Liberal or Labour members; no Tory has held it until this year. Tom Myers won the old Spen Valley seat for Labour in the early twenties. It then passed to Sir John Simon who sat as a Liberal and then National Liberal until 1940. During the wartime electoral truce, the seat passed without an election to Major Woolley who held it as a National Liberal with Conservative support. In 1945 the seat was wrested by Labour hands against the same opponent using the same label. In 1950, boundary changes brought Brighouse into the Constituency and this was held by F. A. Cobb for the Labour Party. Soon after Mr. Cobb died and the late member won the seat by 437 votes. Then followed a shot-gun marriage between the local National-Liberal and Conservative

parties to unite themselves under the banner of United Liberal and Conservative. Major Woolley had been the Tory candidate in every election since 1945 and fought once more under the new banner in 1951, when Mr. Edwards' majority was 2,227. A new United Liberal and Conservative candidate reduced this to 1,626 in 1955 and Mr. Shaw came within 47 votes of victory in 1959.

In local government, Labour gained control of Brighouse and Spenborough Councils in 1958 by narrow majorities and since that year has had two representatives on Heckmondwike Council. This belated climb to power has largely been achieved at the expense of the Independents.

This strong rump of Independence is typical of the Constituency as a whole. It tends to be undominated by any single local caucus; it certainly has no one outstanding social or industrial characteristic, and consequently no single outstanding centre of political controversy. No trade union holds a predominant sway and the party has never had a sponsored candidate.

On the whole, the local Party is exceptionally weak. Attendances at meetings are small, and composed almost entirely of the over-forties—and the number of members is probably smaller than the official figures. Its impact upon the local area has been feeble. Faced with the spread of apathy in a marginal seat, little or nothing has been done to reverse the trend. This weakness reflects itself at every level: organisation, response to trends in national policy, effective participation in local affairs. This contrasts remarkably with the vigorous Conservative association, with its strong Women's and Young Conservative Clubs, and an electoral organisation carried to the refinement of street organisers, which the Labour Party has not tried to match.

### A Record of Expulsions

Why is the spirit of so marginal a constituency so weak? And where are the activists? That is not a rhetorical question. For one of the key points in the decline was the decimation which resulted from the expulsion of 17 members of the West Riding Federation of Peace Committees from the Party at the height of the Cold War in 1952. It is common knowledge in the area that this was forced through, not because these people were "subversive agents", but as part of a general campaign against Left or unorthodox ideas in the Party. What is more, the expulsions, from all accounts, was carried through by the Yorkshire Regional Organiser, Mr. John Anson, with the ruthlessness and authority with which he has managed the local parties for many years. Mr. Anson was Agent in this by-election.

It is clear that some, at least, of the organisational weaknesses of the local Party in the election, and one of the causes of a general falling away of active support in the area, can be traced to this long history of administration-from-above, which reached a point of

climax in the 1952 expulsions. In a local area such as this, composed of small communities, these traditions and their consequences linger: particularly when they can still be seen to operate quite actively—as we shall see when we describe the selection conferences. One of the professional agents working in Brighouse during the election spontaneously remarked upon the difficulty he experienced in getting people to take part actively, because of the record of expulsions, and the acquiescence of the local Parties in the decisions at the time.

In addition to this special piece of local history, the Party suffers from a seeming inability to acknowledge its own weaknesses. For some years, the theme that "our M.P. is respected throughout Europe" has become a substitute for politics. There has been little incentive in this to keep the hard core of Party workers active or alive between elections. This does not mean that this is a district lost to politics. The strong local sense of community, and the ease of communication through key people make it possible to develop and maintain political campaigns far more easily than in a large industrial suburb. There have been successful CND meetings in the area, there were Boycott Meetings—unsponsored by the Party—during the election itself. There is a Young Left Group, which was not mobilised—and certainly not fired—by the prospects of a by-election; there is support for the West Riding Left Club. Activity at the grass roots is both possible and profitable.

### Choosing The Candidate

Yet the Party appears to be the victim of its own depression. "Apathy" and "the telly"—the excuses for inactivity—become, in the end, the *cause* of inactivity. The Party has taken its finger off the pulse of local life, retreating behind the ready-made formulations: though Brighouse is in a better position, potentially, than any of the sprawling suburban constituencies of Leeds. In the past three years, the Party has had at the most one Brains Trust and two or three talks by local members. Many of the Party documents have never penetrated to the Constituency meetings.

It is a familiar story: politics gradually disappears, and is replaced by a deadly bureaucracy. There is an almost overwhelming deference to the senior officials of the region, and the paid organisers. The Regional Organiser dominates the scene. For the past five years, the younger people in the community have been consistently ignored. The Party once had a flourishing youth group: it is no more. A small group, formed after the Blackpool Conference, struggles on with little encouragement. Elsewhere, the plea has been that it is impossible to get youth interested, and anyway "we are all too busy".

The record of the Party in Local Government is no exception to this general pattern. The main achievement of the first two years of Labour control in Spenborough was the conferring of the Freedom of the Borough upon three local worthies, who included the leader of the

Labour group and the father-in-law of the Tory candidate. It is hard to pinpoint what exactly is wrong with administration in Local Government, but there is certainly a great deal of dissatisfaction with 'bumble-dom': when questioned in Council about the closing of Council offices on Saturday mornings, one Councillor is reported to have said: "The rights of the ratepayers are to pay their rates."

How does a declining Party choose its candidate in a key by-election? The Executive Committee had the task of short-listing five names from a panel of eleven, who were then to appear before the Selection Conference. Mr. Anson made great public play in Yorkshire of the fact that the National Executive were leaving the task of selection to the members of the local Party. This was true in the sense that no request was made by the NEC to short-list any of them. Nevertheless, this statement falls short of the facts. Miss Barker, the Party's Assistant National Agent, read the candidates' autobiography, followed by the relevant blurb from the Labour Party *Who's Who*. In several cases she added that this man had fought a particularly good fight in Constituency X, and that the Agent or Regional Organiser had received a good report of his performance. It was not surprising that the favoured five—all successful in the short-listing—belonged to the Gaitskell wing of the Party.

For most of the Executive Committee's meeting, Miss Barker appears to have had the lion's share of the discussion. The Executive participated only in the case of Dr. John Rex, lecturer at Leeds University, a known supporter of CND, who has lectured throughout Yorkshire on Africa, and a member of the Editorial Board of this journal. Dr. Rex committed the crime of putting his political views—concerning Nuclear weapons for Germany and the future of British territories in Africa—on record. When his name came forward, Mr. Anson intervened to say that Dr. Rex had announced he would fight the campaign primarily on Africa and Nuclear Disarmament; he, for his part, wanted it clearly understood that any candidate for whom he was agent would fight on Party Policy. (Africa?). The significant thing about this remark appears to be the degree of unanimity with which the Executive received it.

A heated discussion ended, so it seems, with majority support for the view, expressed by one Executive member: "We must choose the candidates first, and think about the policy later".

### Selection Conference

The Selection Conference did nothing to improve on this inauspicious beginning. Questions to the candidates related to the state of their health or the qualities of their wives. The speeches are said to have shown a degree of disrespect for those few who thought that this election had more to do with politics than Tweedledum and Tweedledee. One candidate went so far as to say that he

wouldn't try to do the Agent's job for him by talking about policy. The only serious departure from orthodox Gaitskellism was the candidate who was so revolutionary as to say that he favoured the abolition of the public schools.

The mantle of Brighouse and Spenborough fell on Mr. Colin Jackson, barrister, writer and broadcaster: ("You've heard him on the Radio, in programmes like *Any Questions*, *Topic for Tonight* or *At Home and Abroad*. You've probably seen and heard him on Television in *Tonight*"). Ten minutes after the Conference closed. Mr. Jackson struck the first blow for socialism. "I stand behind what the Labour Party stands for and against what the Conservative Party stands for". The battery of eager reporters might be forgiven for believing at this point that the election was not to be a serious one.

### 'Cellophane Politics'

The Agent and *his* candidate faced the problems of evolving a policy for the election and of finding a way to hold the substantial personal vote of the late member. They were opposed by a Tory candidate, the son-in-law of a local Baronet, who had ingratiated himself with the Conservative vote in the division by a ceaseless attendance at every function, from the meanest Flower-Show to the Civic Receptions. Mr. Shaw had indeed undergone a sea-change: the rakish young squire with an untrimmed moustache and collar askew had become, in four years, the archetypal managerial man, with groomed hair, clipped moustache, crisp collar, and firm but personable appearance. He retained an assuring handshake, capable of disabling a Labour leaflet distributor. His constituency rooms were unruffled by problems of policy: his two planks were his local connections and his unerring support for the Prime Minister.

In the face of this accomplished packaging of the Tory image, the 'personality' issue became the dominating one in the election. Labour chose to present Mr. Jackson, in the words of the instructions to the Agents, as "the man who knows the world"—as compared with Mr. Shaw, who knew the area. So that it was the Tory who had roots in the local community, and Labour who slipped a smooth, accomplished man of the world into Yorkshire through the wings. "You've heard him on *Tonight*"—nobody had. He was warm hearted, energetic, he had "a keen sense of fun" and "a ready understanding of other people". "Folk" will like him. As the election progressed this personalisation of the candidate increased. "The plight of the old folks" was a phrase which lived and appealed in October 1959: in March 1960 it jelled and stuck in the constituency's throat. They had heard how Mr. Jackson "was saddened by the sight of an old person trying to conceal the fact that she had only two biscuits for tea" three or four times too often. The concern for Pensions became a wearisome parade: so that in the eve-of-poll television broadcast,

Mr. Shaw was allowed to get away with the statement that an increase in Pensions depended upon the stabilisation of the pound, while Mr. Jackson was still untying the knots he had drawn round himself in an effort to relate Pensions to Capital Gains.

The Labour Party, having committed itself to a tactic of 'man first, policy after', seemed to evade the problems that were implicit in the selection of a policy with which to fight an election at a time of bitter internecine strife. Thus, in its leaflets the merchandising was glib ("introducing Colin Jackson") but the content was meagre (failing, for example, to include municipalisation of housing, or comprehensive education). "With Colin Jackson as your M.P. you will have a man who is well-known". This appears to be the Labour Party's new line in candidates. It is confirmation of a trend already established in the General Election. Choose the man for his public personality, and some of the credit and glory surrounding him *must* reflect upon your Party and your Constituency. It is a new kind of deference politics.

The Tory candidate went for his prey as a hunter goes for a wounded leopard, "I am opposed to nationalisation and I know you are too". Mr. Jackson tried to evade this question by concentrating his attack on the Take-over Bid and relating this to the threat of unemployment. This was the second sacred-cow of the campaign. Of course, as any local man will tell you, there have been very few take-over bids in Brighouse and Spenborough. The purchase of mills, either closing or

rapidly loosing their trade, has had the effect, on the whole, of securing rather than endangering employment. It was a desperate but unsuccessful manoeuvre to divert attention from the cloak-and-dagger stuff going on in Smith Square.

Mr. Jackson also attacked Mr. Shaw for fighting under the spurious banner of "United Liberal and Conservative" candidate. This was good for a few votes, but the electorate have lived with this title for long enough to understand its limitations and purpose. But Mr. Jackson played it for ten minutes of every thirty minutes speech. He appealed to "genuine radicals" to draw together on March 17. But what was the political basis for this appeal to Radicalism? Mr. Jackson believed in the policies of Deterrents, and never permitted the word Africa to cross his lips.

The failure of the Party in this by-election lay, not in the loss of the seat but in its inability to touch—except marginally—the consciousness of the electorate. In fact, a serious political campaign was incompatible with the gloss with which the Party, in its search for a modern 'tone', covered everything. The candidate's performance was little short of an undergraduate circus. "A man with a keen sense of fun" could not run the risk of involving himself in a serious, connected, political argument. Colin Jackson went on, to meet the people, to jolly them on, to give them the vicarious kick of talking to a man who was a personal friend of Mr. Nehru—and to lose.

## Notebook

FROM NEWSPAPER reports over the country during the General Election campaign, a reader gained the very distinct impression that London and the Midlands were islands of prosperity in a sea of underdeveloped areas. Lancashire was depressed about cotton. Gloucestershire was dubious about aircraft. Tyneside, South Wales and Scotland were made to sound like Calabria. Most of our basic industries seemed either to be in a bad way, or if they were undeniably prosperous, They Were in the Wrong Area.

Now that (in practice at any rate) the Government appears to take the view that Tory Freedom by itself does not work (it is Labour that is still talking about "prosperity"!), it has been forced to intervene—and frequently to subsidise—most of the important sectors in the 'private' sector of the economy: even those so far untouched do not seem likely to have to wait long: from preliminary noises, it appears that shipbuilding and machine tools (both undeniably important and manifestly incompetently run) are next in the queue.

## Planning by Stealth

Nicholas Faith

Without engaging in agonising reappraisals of principle, or involving their Party in the niceties of revisionist re-formulations, the Government has admitted, *de facto*, that the 'dash for freedom' does not ensure a steady increase in the gross national product, or distribute employment evenly over the whole British Isles. Indeed, they have taken up policies which would not only have been condemned as rank socialism in the thirties, but could scarcely have been conceived during the retreat from planning and controls in the halcyon years of the Mr. Butler's dash for freedom.

Each intervention has been piecemeal, reflecting different industrial situations. The old traditional pattern is still to be seen in the farming industry. This conservative enclave has been subsidised to grow certain crops, not because this makes economic sense, but because of strategic or Defence considerations: or to try and revive regions of depopulation like the Welsh hills or the Scottish Highlands. There can be no other reason, in the age of the Polaris missile-submarine,

for growing sugar-beet or wheat in this country. In return, the Government adjusts its payments to follow market trends—since its anticipation of consumer demand seems pretty poor. Many industrialists have farms; they have seen a form of state-aid without interference, without profits, at work. The cinema industry, by contrast, can go to the wall, since it is neither an effective lobby nor connected (except by way of such masterpieces as *Sink the Bismarck*) with Defence.

The cotton industry, on the other hand, was paid to scrap machinery which should have gone years before. It was still there because the Lancashire manufacturers were unable to make the effort necessary to compete with foreign mills operating modern machines on a three shifts a day basis. Many of the newer textile industries were in countries with low labour costs and a large local market for cheap and unfinished cloth. The effort to compete in these fields was encouraged by a short-sighted Labour Government, which needed immediate textile exports, and sacrificed a planned rationalisation to that. But that was some time ago.

With the motor industry, the Board of Trade has reached a rough compromise, satisfactory—in the long run at least—to all. The Government has steered them into needy areas of high unemployment with one hand (BMC, Ford and Standard to the Merseyside; BMC, Rootes and Pressed Steel to Scotland; BMC, body pressings and radiators to South Wales), recompensing them on the other hand with direct grants (still to be negotiated), long-term loans, and a complementary, but necessary, loan of over £100 million to the steel industry. True, the motor manufacturers would have preferred to remain in their old lairs: but there are advantages to the motor companies in being induced and bribed into such an area as the Merseyside, where skilled labour is available, which is near to supplies of sheet steel and close to a large and convenient port. In return for the “dislocation”, the Board of Trade has, of course, agreed to an expansion in the industry worth £160 million over the next two years. (This is referred to, at greater length, in John Hughes article on the Railway Muddle).

In the aircraft industry, the Government has fashioned a realistic compromise between itself and the powerful personalities of the industry, who have managed—at considerable cost to the country—to persuade the Government for 10 years to support 10 or 12 expensive design teams where three or four would have been enough. Confronted by such personalities, each of them loudly confident in their abilities to produce the most efficient British monster of the air, the Government has simply, over the last decade, refused to choose. The rationalisation and mergers, therefore, are simply a series of shot-gun weddings, designed to preserve the fiction that this is *not* a nationalised industry, dependent almost entirely on Government policy. There is really only one argument against nationalising the aircraft industry: if the previous examples are anything to go by, the scale of compensation agreed would be so

high that the industry will never again make a profit, and thus it will cost the country less to continue on the present basis. This is not an argument one has seen widely used!

In the anti-nationalisation campaign run by the steel industry before the Election, tributes were paid to it by all sorts of people *except* the consumers of steel. They may have been asked to say a few words, but these were certainly unprintable. The steel industry has been unable at any time since the war to supply enough steel, and advertisements which try to prove the contrary are simply untrue. It has preferred to make as much profit as possible by not running the risk of keeping plant idle during times of industrial recession. The result of this policy has been that at times of comparative boom, steel is obtainable only at six or nine months delivery, and we have had to import steel from abroad, thereby endangering the balance of payments and dislocating industry. The £120 million lent by the Government is thus a bribe to induce the Steel Companies to make bigger profits, for if previous experience is any guide, the expansion plans will still fall short of demand. They will consequently be used at full blast from the moment of installation.

The situation here contrasts with that in electricity supply, a very similar industry. In both, investment plans have to be made years in advance, needs have to be anticipated three to five years ahead, units have to be as large as possible to reduce costs. Yet no-one has seriously complained about electricity supply for years: the industry, concerned not primarily with profits, has made a steady profit, succeeding where steel—the apple of industry’s eye—has noticeably failed. Two—no, two-and-a-half cheers for nationalisation?

Just as the Labour Party commits itself to the thesis that private industry is, on the whole “serving the nation well”, the Government in practice gives this assumption the lie. The resulting economy would seem to be mixed-up rather than mixed. But it will depend much less on defence work. Now that they have tasted the sweets of straight government help, industrialists can complain of the ‘burden’ of defence without feeling that without it they will be left naked to shiver in the market-place of Tory freedom.

## Crowther In Cold Storage

Stuart Hall

Hailed by everyone as forward-looking, the *Report* has been officially welcomed and officially shelved. The welcome is hardly surprising, since the major recommendations are no longer controversial. It established for the late-Sixties, targets for full and part-time education which were recognised as basic in the 1944 Act. But on the “operational level, where

money is raised and spent", Sir David Eccles has, like his predecessors, retreated.

The *real* advance which the *Crowther Report* made was to try to commit the Government to a timetable—to prevent the Report having to be made again in 1980. It is the timetable which Sir David has now abandoned—and it is difficult to see what is left. The implication of the Report was that the situation in education had reached such a pass that nothing immediate could be done to remedy it: and that, in order to envisage raising the school-leaving age some time between 1967 and 1969, "energetic preparations should be made". But Sir David has now refused to set a date, *even for* 1967–1969, when the leaving-age would be raised to 16. He has even refused to implement the recommendation that children should not be allowed to leave school automatically at the end of the term in which they are 15: a proposal which should have been modest and short-term enough even for the Minister.

Sir David is clearly overwhelmed by the grim shambles of a system which he has inherited. On the one hand, the teacher-training course has been extended by one year, thus cutting even deeper into his supply of teachers: on the other hand, he must find, by 1970 (and pay) the 17,400 extra teachers needed, if the school-leaving age is to be raised at all this decade, as well as the 61,800 required, if the size of classes are to be reduced. That will entail a rise in the expenditure on education from £700 million to £1,000 million in the mid-Sixties. But behind Sir David are the backwoodsmen of the Tory Party, led by Mr. Thorneycroft, screaming "inflationary expenditure", and the constituencies are full of active Party women complaining about taxes and rates. In the long run, as even Sir Geoffrey Crowther sees, smaller classes, *and* more teachers *and* an extra year will have to come, if the whole system is to be prevented from coming to a halt: but in the short run, all Sir David can see are bills, and competing scarcities, and expensive priorities, and hostile back-benchers. He is beset by his own contradictions: he "looks forward" (bravely but distantly) to £1,400 million on education in the 1970's, but in the meanwhile, every step which will set the process of educational reform in motion *now* has been postponed. He did commit himself to the view that, if the school-leaving age were not raised in 1970, it might never be. What he did not say, was that, in order to reach the Crowther targets at the end of the decade, we would simply have to afford to raise the education bill within the life of *this* Parliament.

### The Education Roundabout

The problem is cyclical. In order to lower the size of the average class, Sir David needs teachers desperately: but until he lowers the size of the average class, the teaching problem is so formidable that it discourages young people from taking up the profession—apart from the fact that it is scandalously paid. So far, in spite of the *Crowther Report*, which with all its im-

perfections might have strengthened his hand, Sir David has not found the political courage to break into this circle in any decisive way.

And just in case we imagine that the situation is going to right itself by natural processes, it is worthwhile to bear the following figures in mind (correct up to the beginning of 1958).

SIZE OF CLASSES			
No. of Classes with:	30 & under	31–40	41 & over
PRIMARY ... ..	37,490	54,976	27,426
SECONDARY ... ..	36,829	37,664	3,293

*Labour Teacher*, Feb., 1960. Nat. Assn. of Labour Teachers.

## Striking For Kicks

Paddy Whannel

*The Angry Silence* has everything that the critics have said British films lack. The subject matter is contemporary, and shot in an insustrial setting with a black and white naturalism. It deals with a social problem and has a working class hero.

The film demonstrates how irrelevant these characteristics are to quality

Not that it is without merit. Perhaps for the first time on British screens a factory worker comes home to watch the telly and do his pools and it is not meant to be funny. The character of the hero, Tom Curtis, and his relationship with his family is one of the happiest things about the film.

There is a nice feeling for the pattern of family life. Domestic irritation is part of this pattern, as well as sentimental affection, and yet we do not feel that these have been added to give the "other side of the picture". Slight incidents—the mother throwing the front door key from the top window to the little girl on her return from school, Tom going off, with his trousers turned into his socks, to play football with his son Brian, and Brian himself pattering through in his pyjamas to announce: "me heart has stopped"—are carefully observed without degenerating into "social observation".

Richard Attenborough as Tom Curtis plays with an understanding that suggests an ability which would certainly have been developed within the framework of any more progressive industry. The casting of Pier Angeli in the role of the wife Anna (although she is less adequate) is not as inappropriate as might have been feared. Because of this, and because of the script—which, although it has its lapses, at least indicates an awareness of how people actually speak—these early scenes establish on the part of the audience a genuine sympathy for Tom. When his crisis comes, when he refuses to strike and is subsequently sent to "Coventry",

we can accept as true the confusion of reasons that lie behind his decision. In the film's most impressive performance, Michael Craig as Joe, the Curtis's young boarder, intelligently conveys the character's indifference to the adult world of "responsibility", committees and decisions—"as long as he gets his beer and his oats he don't wanna know". He also manages to suggest the feeling of unease that accompanies this indifference. Joe is finally confronted by the meaning of indifference when Tom is beaten up by the young thugs, and the scene between Joe and Anna in the hospital waiting room is quite beautifully played.

Unfortunately these positive qualities are all but obliterated by a chaotic plot and a mounting melodrama imposed on the film from the outside.

The film opens with the arrival in Melsham of a man called Travers who makes secret contact with Connolly, the shop steward, and is represented as the man behind the strike. The atmosphere this establishes is that of the thriller. Presumably Travers is meant to be a Communist. At least his appearance—sunken cheeks, tweed jacket, glasses, etc.—suggests the screen stereotype of the agitator. His actual role is, however, treated so obliquely that he must present a puzzle to many audiences. He is seen every so often ringing London for instructions. A hurried reference on the phone to ICBM is the only hint in the film about the work of the factory. It is suggested that Travers is using Connolly, and Connolly is shown as an old time unionist dreaming of the days of hunger marches and worker's solidarity and resenting the current teenage indifference. But it is hard to believe that Connolly is unaware that he is engaged in secret plotting.

### Irresponsible Wildcats

We are given no idea of what the strike is about. The suggestion is (and it comes from the works manager) that it is utterly trivial—"toilet paper in the bogs" is the only explicit point that emerges. It could be argued that strikes do take place over trivial things, but surely beneath the surface there are deep resentments. Equally, grievances are no less real because communists may exploit them. Yet in the film the labour relations are represented as happy, the workers get a "fair crack at the whip". At the same time, we are asked to believe that the men come out on strike for no real reason, a strike furthermore in which they will get no strike pay. To make this point is not to ask for a "fair statement of the union's case", or to demand of a film that it should be an accurate piece of social reporting. Attenborough has said that he was interested in making a truthful film about a "human situation". The union matters, etc., he said, were just the background to a story about a man in adversity. But how can the human situation be true, if its basic conditions are falsified? A strike is a very complex "human situation", and needs care and depth if it is to be properly evoked on the screen. Presumably there are other men like Tom Curtis in the factory—decent men with wives and responsibilities. What about

them? True, a few stand out with him in the initial stages of the strike but towards the end they are revealed as being quite purposely hysterical. The film cheats in order to enlist our sympathy with Joe, and in doing so it is even prepared to exploit its own sensitive treatment of the Curtis family—for example, in the scenes where Tom's son, Brian, is tarred and withdraws from his father, calling him a dirty scab.

From the moment that Tom becomes isolated from his fellows, the acts of violence foreshadowed in the initial scene, break out. There is a rapid montage showing windows being broken, a car is set alight and finally Tom is savagely beaten up and loses an eye. These scenes of violence are the film's principal distortions of its own honest intentions. We associate them with the forces opposed to Tom—his workmates as the mob, the shop steward, the communist agent. In fact, they are committed by a small group of teddy boys, who even within the early scenes of the film itself are shown to be quite indifferent to the strike and act from no sort of principles at all. They are leather-jacketed grotesques straight from popular journalism, and their leader, Eddie, is made to act in that expressionless, low-lidded, sub-Elvis style that the respectable cinema uses when it wishes to frighten itself by picturing the teenager. Having created this figure of Eddie, not true in itself, it then allows the other men in the factory to become associated with his violence. Connolly in fact is initially shown to be against violence and indeed warns Eddie and his gang, but in fact ends up by being closely identified with them.

One of the most gratuitous and unpleasant incidents in the film occurs when, in a large close-up, Connolly pins a picture of Tom Curtis and his family to the notice board by squeezing a drawing pin through the child's eye.

The style of the director (Guy Green) reflects the mood of the film. When Joe discovers that it was Eddie who put Tom Curtis in hospital and begins to beat him up, the blows fall downward into the camera, the screen filled with Joe's face in looming close-up. The editing develops a frantic pace and a number of quite meaningless and flashy clichés are resorted to. Sometimes these run against the script—as, for instance, where Joe's leather-clad leg fills the screen as it thrusts at the starter of his motor cycle. This violent shot is quite out of keeping with the uncertain easy-going character which is what Joe is like throughout the rest of the film.

### Case Against Democracy

It is important that criticism of the film should be directed at its weaknesses as a film and not simply because it is not on "our side". Sending people to Coventry is a mean and miserable business and is a perfectly proper subject for a film. So too would any other feature of trade unionism.

The film in fact is not anti-union. Indeed, the official union man, with the help of events, brings the men back to 'sanity'. The film is really quite fundamentally *anti-*

*democratic*. It represents the characteristic liberal and progressive acceptance of the rights of ordinary people and the importance of fair play for the workers, alongside a deep fear of the “mob” and of the people taking things into their own hands. The feeling is that there should always be control exercised by the “responsible” people like union leaders, policemen, “sensible” management and so on. This attitude found an echo in critical response, where critics who might have resisted the sensational violence in another kind of film, seemed ready to agree with Miss Powell’s uncharacteristic remark: “life is violent”.

The film has had with one or two exceptions an overwhelmingly favourable critical reception.

The key word has been “courageous”. True, it is more adventurous than most big company products; but it was an obvious box office winner even before the intervention of Mr. Godfrey Winn in the Sunday Express and the real “Angry Silence” case. It touches the same mood and attitude that helped *I’m All Right Jack*. It is also one of the new type “savage exposure—adult subject” pictures: superior certainly in craftsmanship and intention (and I hope I have been fair to this) to the series represented by *Violent Playground* and *Hell is a City*, but sufficiently in tune with them to represent a closing-in on the possibilities for the British cinema hinted at by *Room at the Top*.

## Afternoon In The Studios

Peter Marris

“It is the end of civilisation, isn’t it?” the Member for Blackfriars observed, waving an unlighted pipe at Krishna’s Bride. She posed in a golden crown and trousers of scarlet muslin, politely offering a lotus to the camera. From the far end of the studio, the Ambassador’s wife was listing the ornaments of desire:

“In her hair she wears the traditional brooches.”

On the monitoring screen, palely reflected, brooches.

“In her ears she is wearing the traditional earrings.” Rings.

“Next on her arms you can see the traditional bracelets. Sometimes they are very old . . . On her ankles . . .”

On her ankles the camera discovered, after a moment’s hesitation, traditional anklets. The exposition was at least clear. With the same patient thoroughness, the camera explored the attire of her four handmaids. “Of course,” the Member for Blackfriars added, “they say it broadens the mind.”

“ . . . And thank you very much Mrs. — Mrs.—. Well, no wonder I didn’t catch it the first time. Now, after our glorious summer, we’ve had a hard winter. Our camera man’s been out and about, and we’d like to show you . . .” a blackbird in a bird bath. A bird bath

without a blackbird. The bath is filled from a kettle. The blackbird returns. Sparrows peck the top off a milk bottle . . . “So now I know where my cream goes. And in the studio this afternoon we have the distinguished novelist. . .” With aimless suavity, the announcer introduces by turns a writer, the Member for Blackfriars, a Lady, a cartoon film from Czechoslovakia of which we shall only show one extract, the Queen’s manicurist, and 47 naval ratings from Singapore who are here for the opening of Cruft’s Dog Show.

The wasteland of afternoon viewing: a magazine programme. No one, I suppose, actually watches it. The flicker of polite faces accompanies housewives as they iron the week’s washing, or darn their husband’s socks, rescuing them from the vague uneasiness of feeling alone. The performer can say what he pleases, so long as he doesn’t fidget, or forget to have his eyebrows brushed. Advocate flogging for parking offences, or striptease in cathedrals to encourage church-going, the producer will only remark, “Contentwise that was fine. Now if you’d just remember to lean back a little . . .”

### Organised Indifference

But the programmes must of course be topical—related, however tenuously or trivially, to what happened yesterday, or will happen tomorrow. But not news, or they would deserve an evening performance. So if the Queen Mother is to launch a battleship on Thursday, on Wednesday at 2.45 you will see Mr. Sykes of Croydon, who once made a model of the *Ark Royal* out of matchsticks. And when the first men land on the Moon, Thursday magazine will introduce the wife of the Astronomer Royal to tell us “How I Entertain.”

The distinguished performer matters only for his credentials: he should read impressively in the *Radio Times*. The emptiness of the afternoon is peopled with the dignity of unknown experts and public figures of whom the public has never heard. They are shepherded into refectories, soothed with a glass of gin, left to blunder their way into the studio by the wrong door, and there forgotten. They matter very little, lay members of a hierarchy which reflects—admittedly on a smaller scale—the divine order of the Universe.

For the producer, like God, is invisible and above them, wrapped in the mystery of his control room. At the same time he is everywhere, listening through his microphones, seeing through his cameras—an accessible, Protestant Diety. But though one may petition him directly, he answers only through his priesthood, whose earphones keep them in constant touch. Indeed, like most clergy, they understand the Divine will more clearly than the needs of their flock, whom they shepherd with obscure ritual gestures. The finger of God points, and the performer stumbles through the sentences of some poorly memorised introduction. It revolves, and winds him into the period of his brief occasion. Perhaps, two hours before, he had something to say: somehow, between “I’d like you to meet” and “thank

you Mr.—”, he had hoped to explain in four minutes a social problem, a work of art, the purpose of his life. But before the curiously blind eyes of a television camera, the phrase eludes him. It is of no consequence. Indeed, to say something might be disturbing: who—at three in the afternoon, darning a sock—wishes to examine human misery, the aspirations of creative art, or for that matter, the number of matchsticks needed to make a model of a battleship? And the announcer conveys, with polite nonchalance, the indifference of his audience to the matter before them.

And so, their lines muffled, the performers stumble out into Shepherds Bush, with a cheque in their pockets worth a week of a craftsman’s time, and the key to a dressing room, which they have forgotten to return. Roused by the rediscovery of daylight, they remember what it was they wished to say. So they make their way homeward, to ridicule television, and hope in secret that they will be asked again.

Civilisation has withstood more determined attacks. But why do we spend so much money and effort on killing time?

## Magic of Monarchy

Janet Hase

FLANKED ON one side by the Central Purchasing Department of I.C.I. and on another by the Imperial Headquarters of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Association, Buckingham Palace stands—bulwark of an outgoing empire, fulcrum of the still feverishly rotating wheel of British privilege and power.

A dreary, dank February day in 1960—the day destined to be that preceding the birth of Queen Elizabeth’s third child. The crowd peering through the railings, passively watching large glistening cars draw up at the Palace gates, and disgorge important looking people.

Who composed this crowd to whom the birth of a Royal child was so important? The most striking thing was that there were far fewer people outside the Palace than one would have expected from the newspaper build-up—about 300–350 during all the time I was there—which was from 3.30 to 6 p.m. Most of these were there for only a short time. Except for about fifty or so stalwarts entrenched nearest the gates and railings, the composition of the crowd had changed completely between when I arrived and when I left. This was borne out by the majority of those to whom I spoke—they were walking past on their way home from work; lived nearby; came to look at the crowd; always took the baby for a walk at this time, and took the chance to slip past the Palace in case the Royal birth took place. The press, radio and TV stressed the fact that there were “hundreds” of people there throughout the day and evening for at least a week preceding the birth; certainly the *reporters* were there in droves. I counted twenty-seven cameramen (TV and press) and at least twenty reporters.

And what thoughts and emotions were passing through the minds of this crowd? The *Daily Mirror* recorded that, “twenty-one words thrilled the nation yesterday”, and the *News Chronicle* said, “While the church bells rang throughout Britain, bonfires and floodlights blazed and the whole world rejoiced.” “Mr. Krushchev too will be pleased”, added the *Daily Express*. But the faces of the crowd at the Palace gates showed no obvious sign of rejoicing, or thrill, or joy, or, indeed, of anything. Yet not all the hullabaloo was hypocritical. Many must have felt an unaffected pleasure and anticipation; but when one has subtracted this element of genuine rejoicing, and remembering that unlike most Royal occasions there was no attractive pageantry at all, there still remains a large residue of sentiment that has not been explained, a volume of motives that deserves to be investigated.

Fed to the teeth with all the sentimental crap and shoddy sentiment being spewed forth by the press and radio, but disguised for the occasion as a bland Australian journalist, I interviewed, in the course of two and a half hours, nearly fifty people.

It may seem to be a heartening tendency that the “hard core” was so few, but when I think of what was said to me I am appalled again.

Of my forty-eight, chosen almost at random, seven were students. Two girls from London University—both aged twenty—had been there two hours, and for two to three hours on the two previous afternoons. Why were *they* so interested? Well, it was “lovely” the Queen’s having another baby. They had French and German pen friends (students too) who wanted to know about the Royal Family. Think how wonderful it would be if they could write and say they were outside the Palace when the baby was born. The one male student—at Teachers’ Training College—appeared somewhat embarrassed, but said he thought it would amuse his pupils in France, where he hopes to teach next year, to hear about this aspect of “the English way of life”. He was hoping to prepare a “project”, with newspaper cuttings and his own photographs, as a visual aid!

### An Example To Us All

Save the reporters, there were more women than men, and these mostly middle-aged and middle-class. The reasons for the latter are obvious. Buckingham Palace stands in a middle-class area, and those who were just passing in the main lived nearby, or at least did not have to go much off route to take in a short sojourn at the gracious gates. It would have been interesting to have gone off Vauxhall Bridge Road, say, into a working-class area, and to have asked housebound or working mothers if they would have spent time at Buckingham Palace had circumstances permitted it.

Two middle-class women were very voluble; “She’s an example to us all—a wonderful wife and mother—such a happy family—I’m so interested because my daughter is her age and has a little girl almost the same age as Princess Anne. Oh, and Princess Anne was born

on my birthday, and I feel this is such a coincidence! I take a personal interest in everything that happens to the Royal Family—don't you? (This identification process: birthdays, sex, age, was a repetitive pattern with many of the women I interviewed.) While I groped for an answer, she thrust a peppermint at me, "to keep out the cold", and then barraged *me* with questions about what I thought of England, the Queen, Prince Philip, the *tradition*—"Don't you find it inspiring?" This conversation was interrupted by a wizened chatter-box who said *she* had an interesting story for me. She'd been in hospital for twelve months, just out in time for the Royal birth ("Wasn't that a thrill?") and she'd spent all her National Savings bringing down her friend from Lancashire, (dragging a lean mousey woman from out of the crowd in much the same way that one drags a limp handkerchief from a tight pocket). Those around said, "Oh!" and, "Isn't that nice now?"

The Commonwealth—particularly the white part of it—was well represented. A Melbourne pharmacist was thrilled to have this "rare opportunity" to "participate" in an event of such importance. Her trip to England was a "once in a lifetime" affair. It was her "amazing good fortune" that the Royal birth should take place while she was in London. The Royal Family represents what the "Commonwealth stands for"—(what is this, I wonder?)

I didn't speak to the New Zealander who made himself so well known to the TV and listening public by spending days and nights outside the Palace, contenting myself with a New Zealand married couple who were "thrilled" to spend part of every day outside the sacred gates. An old lady from South Africa, blue with cold, was there from eleven to eleven every day. She couldn't stay later because of the difficulty of getting into her hotel. She had nothing to sit on, and except for the odd visit to a tea shop, had done this for three days. She had been presented to the Queen some years previously in some ceremony connected with War Graves, and was quietly and pitifully dignified in her acceptance that this was a good and pious way of spending the chill February days.

There were other Australians—and Americans—all full of the same pointless platitudes.

Although I expected it, the fact that people fitted into categories—were almost stock characters—still surprised me. A middle-aged Englishman had been there six hours on each of the past two days—would be back tomorrow. Very interested in Royalty. An Army man from an army family. His father had been a professional soldier with five sons in the army. Two of his sons were in the army. Having three children of his own, he looked forward to the birth of the Queen's third. (Identification again.) Of course, he was "British and proud of it"—"the greatest Royal Family in the world".

Equally typed, and uttering the British-and-proud-of-it routine were a married couple up from Kent for the day. The Queen and Co. were a "wonderful family", lived "just like ordinary people", were "just the same as

you and me". I pushed on this one. Did they really think this—did they not feel the Royal Family vastly superior to themselves? No! Just an "ordinary family".

And then a young mother with a baby. She lived nearby, and walked the baby past the Palace every afternoon in hopes that the notice would appear while she was there. Today she was sure would be the day. She had dreamt it would be. Of course she couldn't stay much longer; it was cold and her baby must be fed. But just think what a thrill it would be to tell her little girl that she was in her pram outside the Palace when Prince or Princess? was born.

"Oh, yes, I think it's the most important event of the year," said an elderly woman who had come with her daughter and grand-daughter. This sentiment was echoed by a Surrey shopkeeper and his wife (half-day closing). "Well, we often come to London to go to the shops or a show during the afternoon, but you couldn't do that this week, could you? We owe it to her (the Queen) to be here." There was much of this loyalty in the old Empire tradition. As another middle-class mother remarked: "I think she'd *like* to know that we're out here, wishing her well. I've got three children myself—boy, girl and another boy. That's why I hope her third's a boy".

A sharply-dressed young man told me he'd come to look at the crowd but it rather "got you in" when you saw people cold and waiting. You felt you couldn't go in case you "missed out" by a few minutes. I asked many people if they wouldn't get as much satisfaction in hearing about it on the radio. Oh no, this was being a "part" of it; sychophanting at the gates, they felt really involved.

Except for a few women, no one cared whether the new baby were a girl or a boy; and those who did seemed to have no reasons except personal identification for their preference. No one seemed to anticipate the Queen having a difficult birth—"She's got such good doctors," one woman said—as if that were surprising!

Were these people exceptional? I don't think so. For every ten at the Palace gates there must have been a thousand glued to radio and television screen, eagerly digesting every newspaper, wishing they could be outside the Palace when the notice appeared. I could have stayed longer, spoken to more people, returned the next day; but to what end? The pattern was repetitive, the theme unvarying, only the emphasis veering slightly in the wind of individual wish and identification.

## Religion of the Celebrity

Stephen Hatch

THE ADULATION of the monarchy is a fairly recent phenomenon. In 1830, at the death of George IV *The Times* wrote; "There never was an individual less

regretted by his fellow creatures". Queen Victoria was never as unpopular as that, but as the powers of the monarchy declined so the popular attention devoted to it also declined. Until the 1870's. Then the great change began. With the rise of imperialism and the growth of a democratic instead of an aristocratic system of government the crown was lifted out of all controversy: it became an object of veneration instead of argument, the symbol of a rising tide of nationalist emotions which needed an outlet in pomp and pageantry. Hence the Jubilee celebrations of 1887 and 1897, which were the first expressions of the modern popular monarchy.

Since Queen Victoria, the monarchy has become still more popular. It has become less aloof, less formal, and less closely associated with the aristocracy. At the same time its daily doings and family life are now regularly conveyed to the audience of the press, TV and radio.

Part of the new popularisation of the monarchy is an insistence that the Royal Family is really just like any other family.

"What they have done is to show that the family in Buckingham Palace shares the same human problems and feelings with the family in any home in the kingdom". (*Daily Mail*.)

"The heady pleasures of love and marriage common to every fluttering typist who ever flashed a five pound engagement ring around the office are hers at last." (*Sunday Dispatch*.)

And so on, and so on. But of course they are just that little bit better than us.

"He will be wonderful with the Royal children. They have a great new friend in Uncle Tony", and "Tomorrow you can read . . . why he will make such a wonderful family man." (*Daily Sketch*.)

All is for the happiest in the cosiest of all possible families. Underneath they are just the same as we are, or at any rate as what we would like to be. This is an image with which people very readily identify themselves, and in a limited way it is an assertion of equality: people cannot identify themselves with someone on an obviously very different plane, who leads a life quite unlike their own.

## On the Side of the People

The engagement of Princess Margaret was an opportunity for cementing this identification, and emphasising the democratic and egalitarian aspects of the monarchy. Here, as *The Guardian* put it, was "a, fairy story romance of a young man working for his living like countless other young men, who has won the hand of a princess". "What could be more in tune with the age", wrote the *Daily Express*, than for the Queen's sister to marry a young man who has, "made his own way in the world by his own industry and talents". "The Jones Boy", as the *Daily Herald* headline described him, was getting ahead like any other young man who wants to go places. The *Daily Express* put the sentiment quite aggressively: "Princess Margaret will have to come over to our side, the side of the people".

But there are ambiguities. "Come over to our side" means something quite different to different people. A popularisation that delights the factory worker, may to the army officer be vulgarisation. Hence the warning note of the *Daily Mail*: "This lowering of barriers could have dire effects upon the throne."

Moreover, very few of the readers of the *Daily Herald*, if they had had any experience of Mr. Armstrong Jones's life, would really have felt him part of their world. Would any of them have felt at home in an environment of ski clothes designing, models and gossip columnists? And if Mr. Armstrong Jones does belong to "the world *we* live in", the Royal Circle clearly does not, even though Mr. Jones is going to represent us there. The Royal Circle is indeed quite different from 'us'. Why else do crowds stand dumbly outside the Palace on the offchance of a fleeting glimpse of some member of the Royal Family?

The distinguishing feature is the fact that the Royal Family are celebrities, and unique among many celebrities. Unlike footballers or film stars or singers, they have not had to win their way to fame and popularity. They are not distinguished by peculiar qualities and achievements, and they wield less power than most politicians. They exist merely as celebrities. Their lives are endowed with an irrational importance, and an atmosphere of 'glamour', 'beauty', 'excitement', 'record breaking' and 'romance'.

In part, the existence of celebrities is due to the very nature of communication in a mass society. In order to catch the attention of the public the events reported by the mass media must take on an existence larger than life. The humdrum happenings that make up the lives of ordinary people are not newsworthy. Hence a category of personalities and events has to be created with an existence quite different in tone from the mass public. In comparison, the lives of ordinary people seem dull and uninteresting: when an unusual event does happen people are inclined to say, "it's just like the papers". So the celebrities become a vicarious palliative for boredom, emptiness or loneliness.

More important, celebrities personalise events and processes which the ordinary person no longer understands. The celebrity appears to be equal to us and near to us—because his every doing is so fully uncovered before our eyes—but at the same time he is high and mighty and famous. Authority appears to be democratised when it can be displayed so fully in the pages of the gossip columnists. As power becomes more and more remote, and the understanding of society increasingly difficult, so it appears to be closer to us than ever before, its personalities and processes displayed before us in ever increasing abundance. So it is that the *Sunday Dispatch* can claim: "Mr. Jones, the husband of our princess, will represent a symbol of our new and awakened democracy," when in reality this spurious egalitarianism serves only to thwart a desire for equality, and conceals the extent to which the practice of government departs from its democratic ideal.

# The Working Man's Churchill

*The Life & Times of Ernest Bevin*, Vol. 1, by Alan Bullock: William Heinemann. 35s.

WE HAVE already had two attempts, from journalists, at a life of Ernest Bevin. The standard of scholarship we now get from Mr. Bullock of St. Catherine's Society is on quite a different plane from that we had from Mr. Trevor Evans of the *Daily Express* and Mr. Francis Williams of *Forward*. Unfortunately, however, the absence of a critical approach to their subject is common to all three.

The complaint is *not* that Mr. Bullock so obviously and thoroughly approves of Bevin; what is asked for is *not* the antipathetic approach which would perhaps be necessary to satisfy Lord Morrison, Mr. Crossman, Mr. Bert Papworth or Mr. Molotov. What is required is that Mr. Bullock should be able more often to set aside his approval at least to ask questions about Bevin's motives and behaviour, to ask whether sometimes alternative lines of approach would not have been more successful than the policies he adopted. But there is very little of this in all Mr. Bullock's 654 pages. In his preface, Mr. Bullock explains that when he was invited by Arthur Deakin to write the life ("as a historian sympathetic to, but not a member of, the Labour Movement") he agreed, on the one condition that there should be no question of a commission to write an 'official' life. Yet despite this, Mr. Bullock, with this book, stakes his claim as hagiographer of the movement. Bevin is painted as near to a Labour Saint as is possible without resort to stained glass.

There is no suggestion, of course, that Mr. Bullock is deliberately slanting the picture he paints. Reading the book one becomes more and more convinced that he finds in Mr. Bevin a true hero-figure; that the qualities Bevin had are those admired by Mr. Bullock and those he lacked are those Mr. Bullock considers unimportant. Bevin is a working-class Churchill, and that is admirable. He is an empiricist and that, too, seems to fit with Mr. Bullock's own approach—which is one of the reasons why all the patient scholarship which has gone to make this book produces no new insight into its subject matter.

There is plenty of new information about Bevin. All readers, and particularly those 'on the left', will find a great deal to surprise them. Bevin's early militancy and revolutionary socialism, his intense class-consciousness, his desire to build a strong Industrial Alliance as a fighting weapon against the employers, and his attitude to the relationship between 'direct' industrial action and 'the constitutional question' (here Mr. Bullock does seem to be a little on the defensive) are all brought into high relief. But with all the new information there is very little insight into the motives, mind, values and complexity of the character of Bevin. These are taken

## Book Reviews

for granted, endorsed almost without question.

Two of the major events covered are the amalgamation story which founded the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1922, and the General Strike. Without Bevin's drive and political skill there would have been no amalgamation. His greatest contribution was the combination of trade and territorial representation still used successfully in the constitution of the 'T. & G.' But remembering that two years before, he had apparently dragged his feet and thus contributed to the defeat of an alternative amalgamation scheme, it is difficult to dismiss the notion that Bevin only wanted an amalgamation if it was of his making, and if it put him at the centre of the new concentration of power which would be the result. How he fixed the full-time national positions, jockeying Ben Tillet out, is well explained and justified. (Incidentally, in his *Memoirs and Reflections*, Tillet is very restrained about this and puts on record a version which does Bevin more than justice, and Union unity no harm). The officials of amalgamated unions for whom Bevin had no place in the new Union were pensioned off to the House of Commons—a practical enough illustration of what Bevin thought of Labour Parliamentarianism at the time.

Bevin's fight before the General Strike for a unified and disciplined command culminated in his dominance over the Strike Organisation Committee (the actions of this committee were coloured by Bevin's desire to "keep power within his own hands", according to Symons in *The General Strike*—but Mr. Bullock tells us nothing of this). When the Strike was called off we are told that, "It now became clear that, in their anxiety to call off the Strike, the General Council had taken no steps to implement their own instructions. No arrangements were made for an organised return to work; each Union was left to scramble back and make the best arrangements it could with the employers. Nothing so alarmed and aroused Bevin as the discovery that this had been left to chance" (p. 338). The reader is left doubting if the man who dominated the Strike Organisation Committee should be so easily exonerated from part of the responsibility for this failure? However there is no doubt that at the final surrender to Baldwin, and subsequently when he instructed his own men to stay on strike to prevent victimisation, Bevin came out of the General Strike better than most of the leaders. If only he had been able to muster support in time for his inclination: "For Christ's sake let's call it on again", when humiliation was being piled on humiliation at the surrender meeting.

Bevin was certainly no party to the Birkenhead formula which Pugh, Thomas and Swales, with Citrine as Secretary, agreed to with the government and kept from the miners and the TUC General Council. No other

history of the General Strike has brought out this piece of double dealing so clearly. The miners' unwillingness to put themselves in the hands of the General Council falls into perspective beside this, and is partly explained by it. Symons suggests (on Citrine's authority) that time prevented the Birkenhead formula from being disclosed, but Bullock shows how Bevin had time to redraft his own seven-clause proposals while Pugh and Thomas presented the less objectionable, but earlier, formula which Birkenhead had later spelt-out with explicit reference to wage reductions. Murray (in *The General Strike of 1926*) mixes up the two formulae and assumes Cook was aware of the Birkenhead formula. Page Arnot (in *The General Strike*) left it open whether the Birkenhead formula was in fact discussed, but in *The Miners: Years of Struggle*, he states categorically that it was discussed with the General Council and implies that it was discussed with the miners' leaders.

A great weakness of Mr. Bullock's is that he has little grasp of industrial tactics and strategy. The 'classic illustration' he quotes of trade union tactics (p. 556) is really quite commonplace. He may get in more of the detail, more exactly, but he has none of the insight, for example, which Page Arnot had when rounding off the Birkenhead formula episode: "To these midnight discussions there came a sudden interruption. The Government had sounded out how far some members of the TUC General Council would go. Now it was ready to precipitate matters" (*The Miners*, p. 426). Mr. Bullock, in contrast, contents himself with a long quote from Amery taking the *Daily Mail* pretext at its face value.

Why did Bevin lose his early militancy and enthusiasm for socialism? Mr. Bullock does not ask this question. Perhaps Bevin's development was so much in the desired direction that there is no need to explain it—Bevin's good sense soon put him on the right lines. But for those who think that Bevin changed in the wrong direction, and for those who want more from their history than an acceptance of its facts, the question is an important one. What help do we get from Mr. Bullock's facts and quotations?

Most important is Bevin's distaste for verbal militancy and for people who see the passing of resolutions as an end in itself. His dissatisfaction with this most popular of political games partly sprang from a surprisingly un-liberal view of the place of coercion in society, that force was the "logic of reason". If resolutions could not be backed by effective action, they were worthless, and perhaps actually damaging, because of the cynicism they bred amongst those who had taken them seriously. In considering this view it is necessary to try to distinguish between the hard uphill struggle for principles and policies which have little chance of being put into practice in the short run, and the glib passing of resolutions when it is possible to get a majority for them, although there is no chance at all of carrying them out. Bevin did not make this distinction. He was often right to oppose verbal militancy when, for example, he knew there was no hope of getting the

transport workers concerned to 'black' particular goods. But he was wrong, judged by the socialist standards of his own early life, to give his position as trade union leader greater importance than his duty to fight for whatever ideas and policies he thought were best. There will always be people willing and capable of leading on the narrow trade union front. Left-wing trade union leaders who do not give priority to their own position as leaders will fight for their principles at the risk of losing their jobs and their popularity. Bevin failed to do this, most strikingly and on his own confession when, being opposed to the first world war, he decided nonetheless "to accept passively the opinion of the majority of the men". This is a failure of leadership to be explained mainly by his conviction that leadership based on socialist principle was swimming against a current running too strongly in the opposite direction amongst the British workers. This is illustrated again in his reaction to the unemployment of the inter-war years. Despite Mr. Bullock's claim that Bevin makes the shrewdest recommendation in the Macmillan Report on Trade and Industry, and his view that Bevin was especially imaginative and far-sighted in economic matters, it is obvious that Bevin accommodated himself to the industrial and political conditions of the inter-war years. His proposals to the Mond-Turner group revealed an attitude as conscious of job-scarcity as that of any leader of American business unionism or its ideologists of the Wisconsin School of labour economists. When a leader should have been linking the widespread unrest with socialist policies, through the particular demands of the times, Bevin was proposing rationing out scarce jobs by encouraging early retirement and raising the school leaving age.

One final example of Mr. Bullock's treatment of those parts of his story when Bevin's wisdom should at least be questioned and not just taken for granted. The Nazis had power in Germany. In Britain the call was for a united front. The National Council of Labour issued a statement (March 1933) which condemned Nazi and Communist dictatorship. Mr. Bullock comments that, "there was little the Labour movement could do at this time more than protest and draw attention to the brutality of the Nazi régime". The TUC, "under the leadership of men like Citrine and Bevin", was "as solid as a rock" in opposition to dictatorships and its recognition of the dangers represented by Hitler's and other Fascist movements. But even allowing for the mistakes and shifts in policy by the German and other Communist Parties, a strong case can be made, that by passing on their own confusions about national socialism and communism, these Labour leaders helped make subsequent history as bloody and as frightful as it has been. Mr. Bullock does not consider such a case, and his second volume can begin with an almost blameless Mr. Bevin dealing with problems which neither he nor the other Labour leaders could have done much more than they had done to avoid.

**Ken Alexander**

# The Glittering Coffin

by Dennis Potter: Gollancz. 18s.

DENNIS POTTER'S "scattered, highly impressionistic and youthful description of a few of the social and political problems of present-day Britain" had so much national reviewing space and talent lavished on it at the time of its publication that there ought not to be anything left to say. And in fact, when allowances have been made for the occasional middle-aged obtuseness that refused to see that the book was about anything at all (and for the strange and personal vindictiveness of the *Guardian* reviewer who, though not yet middle-aged, refused to see that the New Left was about anything at all either), there was a remarkable agreement in critical judgments from which, for the most part, I have no wish to dissent. But the very fact of this reverential treatment, with the implication that here at last is the authentic voice of the New Left (which therefore deserves to be listened to seriously and even, being still small, to be patronisingly encouraged), may well make the New Left wonder whether to regard *The Glittering Coffin* as an asset or an embarrassment. The serialisation in *The Daily Sketch* can hardly have done much good to anyone's reputation.

Potter's excoriating attack on the complacencies and rottennesses of present-day British society recalls nothing so much as John Osborne's essay in *Declaration*: the style is as exhilarating and the feeling as genuine. But where Osborne seemed almost obsessively convinced that nothing was usefully to be done in political terms, Potter gives an appearance of sobriety and purpose to his attack by his equally unthinking faith in the Labour Party as the proper instrument of positive progress—despite the fact that his disillusion with actual Labour politicians seems at least as complete as Osborne's. In neither case are any intelligible connexions drawn between the main stream of the polemic and the associated attitudes to contemporary political activity: in terms of what follows, Potter's opening confession that he would like to become a Labour Member of Parliament seems just about as bizarre as Osborne's snorting dismissal of all politicians as Social Salvage Units hovering around his sty. Potter's allegiance to the Labour Party stems, obviously and understandably, from certain very important personal loyalties: it was the aim of the essays in *Conviction* to try and see how what is valuable in such loyalties could be carried into concrete political action; *The Glittering Coffin* is a step backward from this attempt (at least) at constructive political thinking in so far as, in terms of the book itself, Potter's ultimate belief in the Labour Party is too uncritical to allow him to raise the important problems.

For lack of constructive new thinking, in fact, *The Glittering Coffin* very nearly falls into the category of the pure 'attitude piece', offering neither new ideas nor new knowledge, but merely plastering praise and blame across the face of an already familiar world. The need on

the left, following *Conviction* and the earlier numbers of *ULR* and *The New Reasoner*, is for something more than this: anything that is to build on and develop our existing analysis must provide either new concepts or new facts, and mere expressions of feeling can serve little purpose but to maintain emotional steam among the converts and perhaps generate it in others. This is obviously an important function: if 'mere expressions of feeling' with the strength and honesty of this one were to appear every three months or so things might begin to move rather faster; but only if the voice of the New Left was saying something else as well. I think, though, that there are several passages in the book which do redeem it from this otherwise damaging criticism. In particular, the account of social changes in the Forest of Dean seems to me to be sensitive and understanding and to tell us something genuinely new and important: this kind of work, like that of Hoggart and Williams, is vital to any historical understanding of twentieth century Britain, and it is encouraging that Potter has promised us a full-scale study at a later date.

## Not Personal Enough?

It is significant that in this part of his book, Potter's writing attains a quietness and even humility which contrasts sharply with the surrounding rhetoric, without ever degenerating into sentimentality or folklorism. The contrast of style betrays, I think, the central underlying tension: the only connexion between these pages on an old working class community and all the other pages on recent trends in class politics and culture is a personal, autobiographical one. There is no obvious logic to show why the remedy for the latter should lie in the traditional politics of the former—or how. And part of the trouble is almost certainly that Potter's observations, far from being too personal (as some critics have suggested), are often not personal enough. The last part of the book, especially the sections on films, art and journalism, leans heavily on views that have already been expressed elsewhere: Lindsay Anderson, Orwell, Raymond Williams, Peter Shore and many others are directly or indirectly quoted, and the cumulative impression is that Potter is arranging these excellent quotations in order to close the gaps in his own thinking. If the rhetoric here begins to wear thin it is probably just because of this too-liberal recourse to second-hand vision. One gets the feeling that Potter has somehow never really focussed and reflected on these problems for himself: the images of working-class culture and of the new affluent society have never been able to merge into a single picture, and so the contradiction between his strictures on Labour politicians and his professed ambition to become one himself remains unresolved. It is because this contradiction lies at the heart of the new thinking on the left that Potter's failure to throw any genuine personal light on it is so much to be regretted. *Shall* we support Mr. Gaitskell? Has Potter really imaginatively entered into all the criticisms that he has retailed to us? "For me and millions

of other people", he writes, "the Labour Party is still capable of evoking an immediate, instinctive and emotional response, a vast surge of loyalty and goodwill, and an ultimate feeling of purpose transcending the Party's temporary and largely accidental confusion of aims and ideology". Might it not be that Potter's response is too immediate, instinctive and emotional for him to see clearly at all? How many millions of other people share this ultimate feeling of purpose? When does a party's confusion of aims and ideology cease to be temporary and accidental and become permanent and even necessary to its survival?

In his closing manifesto, Potter emphasises the need for educational reform, control of advertising, the revitalising of local government, and summarises the task of mid-twentieth century socialism as that of "restoring or creating the feeling—and the reality—of participation in all the stages of social and industrial existence, to close the gaps between the governed and the controllers at all levels". These are aims with which many on the left would sympathise, but the crucial question of how they are to gain wider acceptance is nowhere explicitly treated. Which, in other words, are the *focal points* at which the ideas need to be directed? Given the trivialisation of politics of which Potter speaks, and the fact that M.P.'s will in general be too harried, whip-ridden or unimaginative to make any serious contribution of their own, ideas will tend to percolate through to the parliamentary Labour Party only from focal points outside. These include—besides constituency and trade union politics—the universities, broadcasting, literature, films and journalism: in time all might be expected to have some effect, both direct and indirect, on official Labour Party thinking. If the time were too great or the channels too congested it would be necessary to think in terms of other forms of political action. And in this way a theoretical question of analysis and interpretation can become a sharply practical one of the chosen political methods. Potter is rightly contemptuous of the Labour Party's "reasonable, practical policies that will appeal to ordinary decent people who are not Socialists", but he has too little to say about how to appeal more deeply with different ideas.

And yet his book is itself a part of such an appeal—perhaps, therefore, a part of the answer. There is a sincerity and directness in Potter's writing which is far from common in political discussion and which may carry his convictions to those who do not already share them. This is sufficient reason to be grateful for the book and not to condemn it too harshly for failing to do something it never set out to do in the first place. The problems remain, but there is every hope that Potter at least will manage to avoid, in his own words, "the usual gracious and always so damnably logical shuffle away from the demands of belief and commitment" for quite some time. I think this is an encouragement.

Colin Falck

## Shorter Reviews

# Essays In Labour History

edited by Asa Briggs and John Saville  
Macmillan. 42s.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY of British Labour has been discussed twice in recent months in *ULR* (numbers 3 and 6), and it may therefore seem somewhat gratuitous to reopen the subject in this journal. But the central question with which one is left after reading these *Essays* is, What is Labour history all about?; or, more precisely, what should be the methods and content of this field of study? Should we agree with John Saville that "the study of working class history is a necessary corrective to present doubt and one of the guides to future action", and rejoice that "in seeking to understand the dynamics of the British Labour movement we shall recreate within ourselves the traditions of those who, in the past, struggled and sacrificed for a better society?" Or should we, while accepting Eric Hobsbawm's plea for the greater depth of insight that comes from commitment to the Left, seek to avoid the almost Victorian crudity of thinking of history as teaching by example? Surely the standards for the contemporary historian (whether of the Labour movement or any other field) must be those of Asa Briggs' *Age of Improvement*, rather than the lectures of Charles Kingsley (even though he was Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge).

To date, the bulk of writing on Labour history has dealt with organisations and economic conditions, leavened with details of the struggles and quarrels of working class leaders. Very few Labour historians have started from the position of G. M. Young, who held that history is not so much what happened as what people felt about it when it was happening. Yet the supreme aim of every historian, Labour or other, must be to strive to hear the people of a past age talking. No amount of economic analysis or tracing of trends can be a substitute for this. The weakness of much Labour history is that it has not yet emancipated itself from approaches and methods derived from economic history and biography; whereas the most exciting developments seem likely to be made by the social historians and the historians of ideas.

Only one of the essays in this collection—that on "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth Century England", by Asa Briggs—adopts an original approach in this sense. The rest are highly competent professional studies in the best British tradition of Labour history which G. D. H. Cole (along with Harold Laski and H. L. Beales) did so much to establish in the inter war years. Intended originally to honour Cole's seventieth birthday, this volume now stands as a memorial to him. Four short introductory essays by Ivor Brown, Hugh Gaitskell, Stephen K. Bailey, and G. D. N. Worswick recall memories of him, especially the warm friendship which underlay his shy, rational exterior. The remaining nine essays are specialist studies in different aspects of nineteenth century Labour history, ranging from the adventures of emigré Polish socialists after 1830, to the rise of the I.L.P. in Yorkshire in the nineties.

All the essays are scholarly and based on original research. This is very much historians' history, and far removed from the broad popular sweeps in which Cole excelled. In fact, at times, there is a danger that some of the essays are little more than academic exercises, extended footnotes to the real stuff of history. If only there were a British Journal of Social or Labour History it would provide the appropriate outlet for such specialist monographs; but since there is no such

journal it would be churlish to complain at their inclusion in a volume of essays. As it is, only an enthusiast for Labour history will relish the minutiae of Stephen Coltham's "The Bee-Hive Newspaper: its Origin and Early Struggles", or the sectarian intricacies of Henry Collins' "The English Branches of the First International". Despite the wealth of detail in both these essays, their significance lies in a much wider setting than the authors have allowed themselves. The same is also largely true of Peter Brock's account of "The Socialists of the Polish 'Great Emigration'".

In his essay on Professor Beesley, Royden Harrison has gone outside the usual run of Labour history themes, and shows how middle class Positivism led to sympathy and support for the working class movement. The analysis of Beesley's relationship with Labour on such issues as the American Civil War, the 1867 Reform Bill agitation, the Sheffield Outrages, and the Labour Laws agitation of the seventies, lead to the conclusion that "he was more closely identified with the labour movement and exerted more influence upon it than any other university teacher before G. D. H. Cole".

As was to be expected from such experienced hands at the game, Eric Hobsbawm's and John Saville's contributions display a masterly touch and range easily over little-known parts of the field. Hobsbawm's "Custom, Wages and Workload in Nineteenth Century Industry" draws on a wealth of material from French, German, Italian and British sources which can only be the envy of more parochial colleagues; while Saville in his "Trade Unions and Free Labour: the Background to the Taff Vale Decision" lifts the lid on British union-busting practices in the 1890's which are reminiscent of the Chicago scene in the early years of this century. Sidney Pollard's "Nineteenth-Century Co-operation: from Community Building to Shopkeeping" is a workman-like job, and shows the need for a thorough study of the later phases of Owenism.

In many ways the most satisfactory of all the essays is Edward Thompson's "Homage to Tom Maguire". Excellently written, scholarly and yet unclogged by detail, the essay succeeds because its theme is exactly suited to its length and method of treatment. Around the central figure of Tom Maguire, a young Irish-Catholic worker employed as a photographer's assistant in Leeds, is woven the story of the rise of the Labour movement in the woollen district of the West Riding in the 1880's and 1890's. The development of trade unionism, the growth of the demand for independent Labour political representation, and the activities of the little band of Socialists, are skilfully portrayed against a background of indigenous Yorkshire radicalism and (undenominational) nonconformity. The remarkable differences in the development of the Labour movement in towns as close as Leeds and Bradford, the influence of local Labour journals, particularly the *Yorkshire Factory Times*, and the richness of character in the local leadership—all are admirably brought out in the essay, and justify the author's claim that it is time that the forgotten "provincial" Labour leaders should be admitted to first-class citizenship of history.

Perhaps the most encouraging thing about these *Essays* is the number of good craftsmen in the field of Labour history which they reveal. This is the finest of all tributes to G. D. H. Cole; for it means that the work which he pioneered will go on.

J. F. C. Harrison

## The Status Seekers

by Vance Packard: Longmans. 21s.

THIS BOOK, another sociological critique of America's middle class by one of its members, is not as well done as some of its predecessors—Mills' *White Collar*, for example, or Whyte's *Organisation Man*. For one thing, although Packard, a journalist rather than sociologist, writes with the charac-

teristic liveliness of his profession (sample chapter heading—'Snob Appeal = Today's Home Sweet Home'), it is actually, for long stretches, rather dull. The central chapters are largely built out of lists of anecdotes and quotations. Secondly, despite the imposing list of sociologists and social investigations which Packard proudly cites ("Political sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld of Columbia University has summed up . . .", "The Institute for Sex Research has found that . . .", and so on), he does not himself evaluate the evidence very critically. A quote from a former antique dealer in Newtown, Connecticut, a builder in Detroit, or a housewife in Dallas, is treated as proof that things are as bad as they say they are. Scholarly evidence which runs counter to Packard's argument, like that of Bendix and Lipset on mobility into business leadership, is ignored.

So it would be a mistake to think that *The Status Seekers* is an 'objective' appraisal of modern America. It is not, and things are nothing like as black as Packard paints them. But the important thing is that the *trends* he describes are real enough—you can already see many of them here in Britain—and in his opening and closing chapters, where he separates out the different threads of social change, he is perceptive and convincing.

About the *general* argument, too, there can be no doubt. Packard's opening question is whether prosperity ushers in the classless society. In a society where, despite great differences in income and wealth, there is little real poverty; where there are cars and refrigerators, washing machines and television sets, cine cameras and garbage disposers in profusion; where the 'mass media' feed millions of homes at all social levels; where large-scale production makes it increasingly difficult to 'place' someone by his or her clothes—in such a society do snobbishness and status distinctions decline?

The answer, of course, is No. As prosperity increases, it apparently becomes more, not less, important for people to mark themselves off as superior to their fellows. As a result, according to Packard, two related things are happening. First, people are striving for status more anxiously than ever. Second, social and ethnic differences are increasingly being stressed, class lines sharpening, the barriers to social mobility rising. The first trend is plain enough, though, as I say, not to the *extent* Packard suggests. The truth about the second seems more complicated; I would say that class is taking new forms, that there are new rigidities, in American society.

### Similar Trends In Britain

What seems to me important about all this is not whether in detail Packard is right or wrong, but that some of the trends he describes are paralleled here. Let me list four of the main ones.

1. *The Rise of Advertising*. In America advertising and salesmanship stand at the pinnacle of business, offering the highest financial rewards. They are, surely, reaching a similar supremacy in Britain—the manipulation of sales is becoming more important than the manipulation of production. Along with this goes the growing influence of advertising on people's lives. We do not know how much, in fact, people are affected by what they see or read in advertisements, and it would be foolish to imagine, as Packard seems to, that they swallow them whole. And yet the pressure is intensifying and British advertising following American in seeking more and more to exploit and intensify status anxiety—from 'Blue Band, the luxury margarine for your *new* refrigerator' to 'Top People read *The Times*'.

2. *Housing*. In Britain, as in the United States, the bulk of new housing since the war has been outside existing towns and cities. Whether public or private, New Towns or housing estates, these new communities are essentially one-class, essentially one-age, essentially suburban. (I know this will annoy New Town enthusiasts, but by 'essentially suburban' I mean low density, two-storey three-bedroom housing, with wire-fenced gardens back and front, wide green verges,

empty concrete roads, and the shops a twenty-minute walk away.) These kind of places, where everybody is new and seeking to 'place' their neighbours and themselves, seem to be great generators of status striving and class awareness.

5. *The 'Diploma Elite'*. This is Packard's term for what is emerging in America as a result of developments in education—developments, again, which have gone as far, or even farther, in Britain. The prestige of a formal education is rising. More and more employers demand degrees and similar qualifications. More and more occupations seek to turn themselves into 'professions', insist on academic training for their members. These trends mean increasingly, as T. H. Marshall pointed out as long as ten years ago in *Citizenship and Social Class*, that 'the ticket obtained on leaving school or college is for a life journey'. The effect of all this on social mobility is not, as many people believe, that there is substantially more now than in 1900 either in the United States or here, nor that there is less, as Packard says. All the evidence suggests that there has been little change in the *extent* of mobility in both countries; the difference is almost certainly in the *means* of achieving mobility, which was formerly via the shop floor and is now characteristically through the Eleven Plus, Grammar School and University. One consequence is that society is becoming inflexible in new and dangerous ways. Another, as Michael Young suggested in *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, that the more that educational selection is based upon 'scientific methods', the more the 'diploma elite' are likely to feel their higher status is morally justified.

4. *The Growth of Scale and Bureaucracy*. Max Weber prophesied that industrial society would inevitably become more 'rationalised' and hence more bureaucratic. Packard reports the process at work in America and it is abundantly evident in Britain. Organisations, whether public or private, get bigger and bigger; the division of labour is taken further and further; administration becomes more and more 'rationalised'. Apart from all the other consequences of this, it has important results for status. It seems that the bigger the organisation, the finer the status distinctions that are made within it, the more important the symbols like size of room, desk or carpet, the number of telephones or secretaries. The more the insistence on protocol about who can use this or that washroom, who can park his car in this or that reserved space. Look at the Civil Service, look at ICI, look at the National Coal Board, look at LSE.

## The Need For Status

These four tendencies are clearly not of equal importance. The last is of the greatest structural importance and the most long-term trend, with what is happening in education as merely one expression of increasing 'rationalisation'. Obviously, too, Britain is a very different society from America. Having a traditional upper class, for instance, may paradoxically make status anxiety less intense and the creation of rigid class barriers less necessary. But the main themes are clearly much the same in both countries. Whether you call the present situation 'capitalism', or not, this is the way things are going.

There are two aspects of this that are particularly depressing. One is that people apparently *need* status differences however well-off they are. (And, though I may not carry many readers of *NLR* with me, I don't think it's good enough to blame this on the 'mass persuaders', 'the Establishment', or 'capitalist values'. People need to know where they stand in relation to their fellows, and in a complex, fluid society this seems to mean in terms of social strata, some of which are inevitably 'higher' or 'lower' than others. The second depressing feature is how seldom current political discussion—even on the Left—manages to come to grips with these problems.

Peter Willmott

# The Chinese Model

*Chinese Communes* by Soviet Survey  
*The China Quarterly* by Congress For  
Cultural Freedom

*Economic Development of Communist  
China* by T. J. Hughes and D. E. Luard:  
O.U.P. 22/6d.

A SPECTRE HAUNTS Chinese studies: the spectre of Stalinism. Time and time again, events in Communist China are described in terms of a model built on the following argument: if the criteria for Communist totalitarian government are necessarily an all-embracing ideology, a monopoly of political power, arms and secret police and a centrally-operated economy, then China, satisfying these criteria, is a totalitarian country. Unsatisfied by this conclusion, the commentators have gone on to assert that China is nothing but another version of Stalinism, with the (often-outspoken) implication that we have mistakenly supposed Chinese Communism to be something different.

"Any illusions of 1949," writes Professor Kirby in the new *China Quarterly*, "as to China being, or likely to become, a deviant or special model of Communism are largely dispelled. In its internal mechanics... the Chinese Communist State appears *ex post* (what many did not expect *ex ante*) to be of strict Communist form—the Russian and Czechoslovakian, not the Polish, let alone the Yugoslavian".

The model is a familiar one, with a well-known family of expressions, concepts and images, a definite range of reference and a well-defined starting point for speculation. Proponents of the model include Mr. G. F. Hudson, Mr. Victor Zorza, Professor Richard Walker, *Saturn, Problems of Communism and Friends of Free China Association*.

The application of the Stalinist model to China has some basis in fact. There are enough similarities between the Soviet Union and China—for example, in the use of Five-Year Plans, the economic ministries, the planning mechanisms, the structure, functions and aims of the Communist Party—to suggest other parallels. Nor is there anything necessarily vicious in approaching the subject of Communist China with the question: To what extent do actual explanations of what is going on in China approximate to the structure of the Stalinist model? The dangers are that more will sometimes be read into specific events than they can bear, and that important features that are there will pass unnoticed. For the sake of Chinese studies, however, it would be better to bury the model altogether.

In the first place, the Stalinist model was not very adequate to describe Stalinist Russia. Constructed out of the worst features of Stalinism—the elimination of the kulaks, the deportations, the purges—it omitted the technological and industrial advances, the educational programme, the role of public opinion, the emergence of a skilled working class; all of which, if taken into account, would have made the important changes in Russia—dated for convenience, but not for accuracy, from Stalin's death—more intelligible. The Stalinist model could never explain Khrushchev. In the second place, what facts we do know about China do not fit this model without a good deal of distortion. The 'liberation', for example, has been described as a seizure of power with the direct aid of the international communist movement, rather than the victory of a fairly popular army (where it was known) led by a determined group of men accepting, in the well-known tradition of Chinese history, the mandate of heaven which the Kuomintang had absolutely spurned. The character of the Chinese Communist Party has been

drawn in terms of Stalinist and anti-Stalinist elements, a description that fails to account for the historical background of the Party. Although ten years in full control and thirty years in existence have seen changes and demotions and sackings, the Chinese Party has yet to experience the tremendous schisms and purges that partly define the Soviet Communist Party. Anything odd and apparently inexplicable like the control of pests, the litterless streets, the fanatical cleanliness is, we are swiftly told, the result of intensive brain-washing—"are the Chinese Communists more Stalinist than Stalin?"—and we are encouraged to ignore the fact that social persuasion, the eliciting of social response by exhortation and precept, has traditionally been part of Chinese government. And thirdly, before one can usefully operate a model that will be of some help to infer things about Chinese Communism, one must surely have some *facts* to understand. Although description usually precedes explanation, the outstanding feature of Western comment on Chinese affairs is the almost universal absence of facts and information.

## All Analysis and No Facts

It is necessary to keep all this in mind when looking at the new material published in this country on China. To anyone interested in the subject, *any* British material would seem to be most welcome. Unfortunately, the spectre of the Stalinist model haunts Summit House as well. What, for example, are we to make of the pamphlet *The Chinese Communes* which, as "a documentary review and analysis of the 'Great Leap Forward', finds the origins of the communes in (1) Soviet experience, "from the beginning (the) instruction and inspiration for the Communists in China"; (2) the fact that the Chinese Communists "tended to be more extreme in their collectivisation than Marxists of urban background. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to China; it is to be found also among revolutionary sects of peasant origin elsewhere—for example, the Spanish Anarchists"; (3) the need to integrate the "communist superstructure with the peasant-subsistence base"; (4) the desire of the Communist leaders "to revive the enthusiasm of the cadres by a further instalment of the 'Permanent revolution'; (5) the ascendancy of the party machine over the state apparatus and so on through the whole, crazy seventy-nine pages? "There remains one last question with regard to the origins of the Chinese communes," writes Mr. G. F. Hudson. "Was the decision to set them up one which all the leading personalities of the Chinese Communist party "were generally agreed or was it one which emerged from an inner-party conflict?" In what sense is this a *last* question? Is it really surprising that "there is some evidence for the view that there were, and continue to be, deep divisions in the Party over this policy"? Does it matter if the public speeches of Liu Shaochi—"resemble the preaching of a religious revivalist" whereas those of Chou En-lai "read more like the chairman's report to a board of directors"? Or vice versa? Can one expect important policies *not* to be contested and argued over? The Stalinist model ensures this line of speculation (it recalls the fruitless speculation spent on estimating the rival claims of Malenkov and Krushchev and the almost universal assumption that Malenkov was a peace-loving Rightist and Krushchev the uncompromising Leftist that prevailed in Western commentaries in the initial post-Stalin period, we can see now how the use of the Stalinist model encourages the making of counterfeit hypotheses. When there is no discussion it is because the Chinese regime is "totalitarian"; when there is discussion, it is because of a major split in the Party leadership!

Turning to the brand-new publication of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, *The China Quarterly*, one is even more disappointed. Here is a journal aiming for "rigorous and objective analysis of Chinese developments", which offers in its opening section "a group of distinguished scholars and directors of Chinese studies from various of the world some

1,000 words in which to present their appraisals of the past decade—to set down what they think are the most important things to be said at this point in Communists China's history". But, again, what are we to make of the claim that "the material and practical dependence on Russia is obvious" and that "the essentially satellite position of China is hardly veiled" (p. 13) when it is followed by the statement that "the emergence of a strong Communist China has also profoundly affected the structure and operational methods of international Communism, which is no longer the Soviet-centred monolith it was before 1949" (p. 24) and "Chinese Communist progress has had its ups and downs since the power shift—if such it was—that followed Stalin's death, but accumulating evidence suggests that Chinese prestige is still gaining and that the readjustment in Sino-Soviet relations is not yet over" (p. 56)? Or of the claim that "there is a striking resemblance between Chinese economic policy of the last two years—the era of the great leap forward—and Soviet policy from the beginning of 1929 onwards . . . the parallel between the present phase in China and the early thirties in Russia is not a fortuitous one. It appears to reflect a tendency inherent in the process of industrialisation, as projected and carried out under a Communist Party dictatorship" (p. 9–10) and the counter-assertion that "it is precisely in its 'Stalinist phase' that China is departing most significantly from many features of the Stalinist model" (p. 21)? Selective subjectivism, one would tend to think, could go no further.

Sometimes, of course, an irreducible truth remains.

"The Communist revolution in China must be initially assessed in relation to the traditional institutions of China, to the durable patterns of thought and action which have moulded these institutional forms, and to the sinewy but subtle Chinese psychology—slowly tempered through the centuries—which has undergirded the whole" (p. 3).

One can only hope that *The China Quarterly* will take Professor Boorman's advice, jettison its window-dressing and concentrate on its professed aims of rigorous and objective analysis. It may become through time a Chinese *Soviet Survey*, which in the ideological circles of Communist studies, is the best one can probably hope for. At the moment, however, one is numbed after struggling through this blizzard.

The last publication, *The Economic Development of Communist China 1949–1958*, is the best of the bunch and the reason for this is instructive. The book is a factual account which discusses in seventeen brief chapters, China's traditional economy, the economic objectives of the Chinese Communist Party, the economic rehabilitation, the inauguration and operation of the First-Five-Year Plan, the great leap forward, Soviet aid, the treatment of private enterprise, the development of communications, the organisation of labour, foreign trade, land reform, collectivisation, agricultural production, control of consumption and the future development of the economy. A useful reference book to the Chinese economy, it brings Solomon Adler, so to speak, up to date. Its scope suggests that it will not be full enough and certainly their treatment, for example, of Soviet aid and population problems, has a flurried look about it. But they do succeed in conveying the impression that the Chinese Communists have been playing the economy by ear, an important point that finds no home in the Stalinist model and will have to be discussed more fully later. The point for us, at this stage, is that the joint authors have based their work on material derived almost entirely from Chinese official sources, and analysis and assessment have been presented cautiously, as befit such sources.

This book demonstrates that it is possible to trawl the China Seas without using a fishnet of Stalinist mesh. Political ichthyologists should take note.

Roy Wilkie